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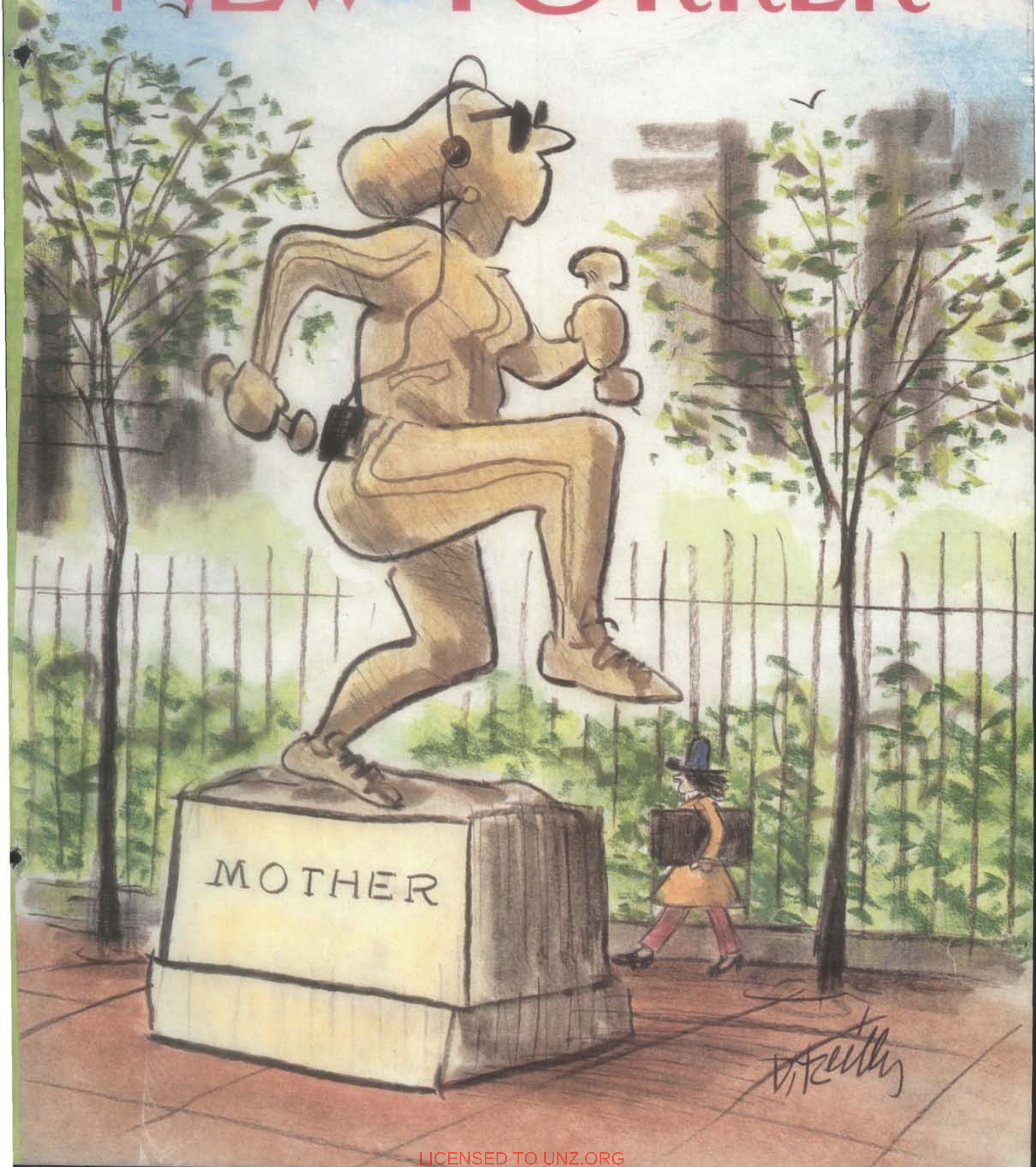
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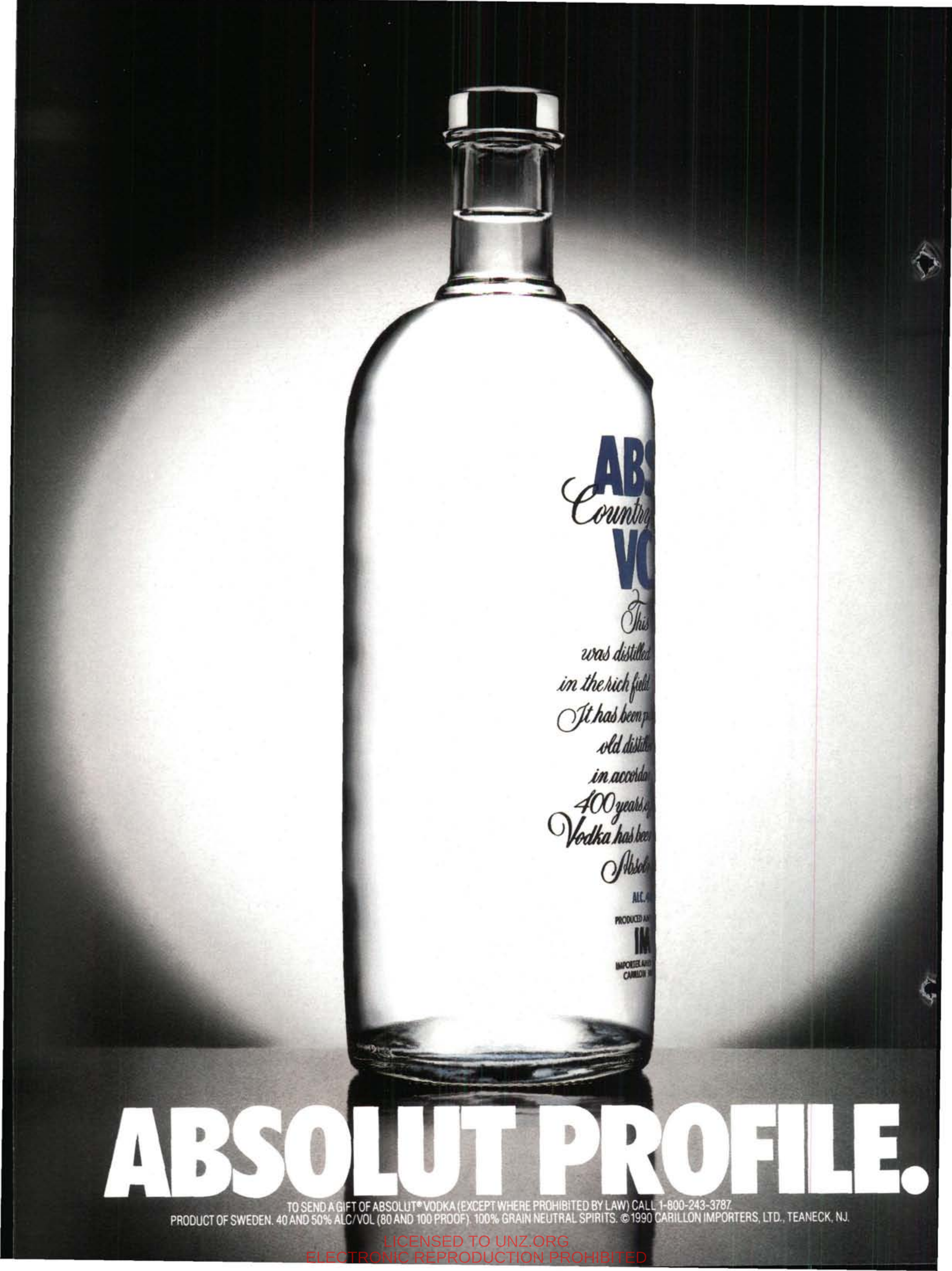
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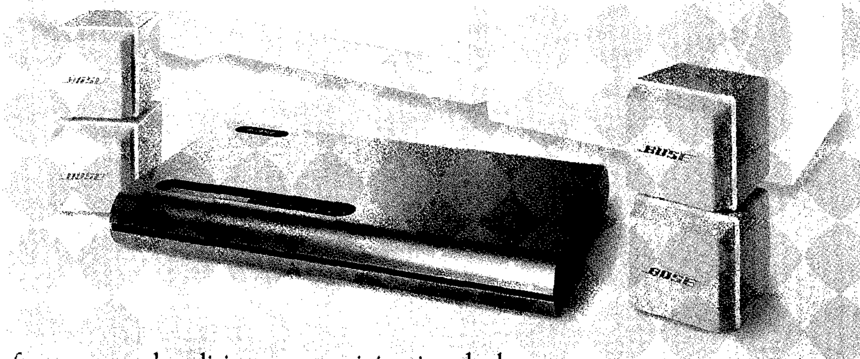

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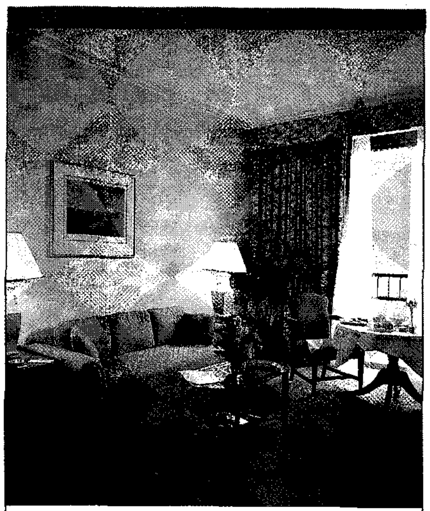

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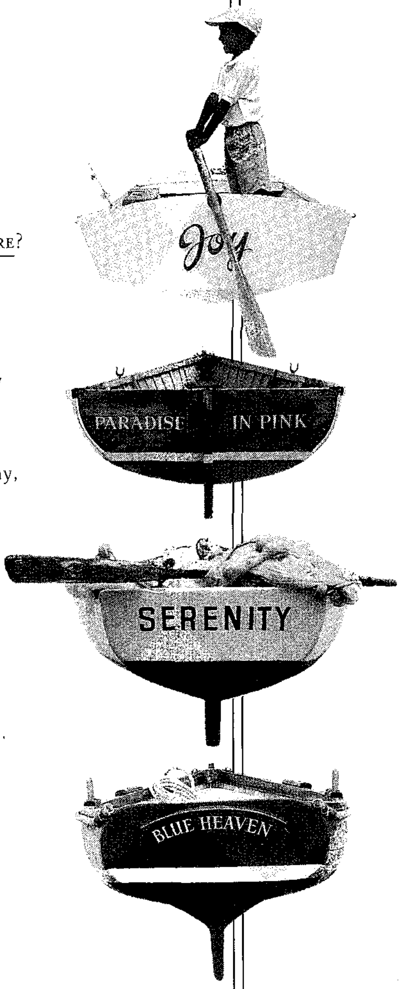

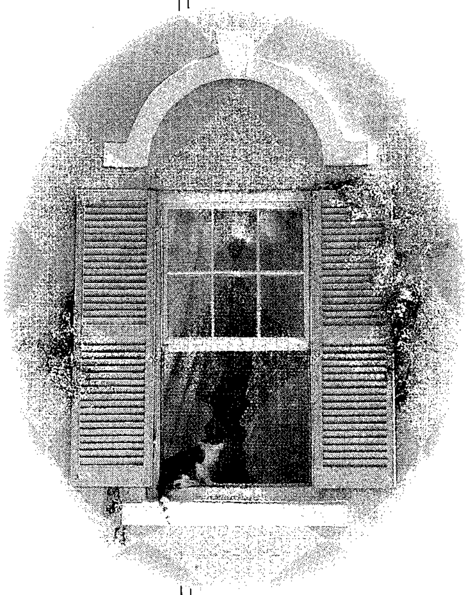

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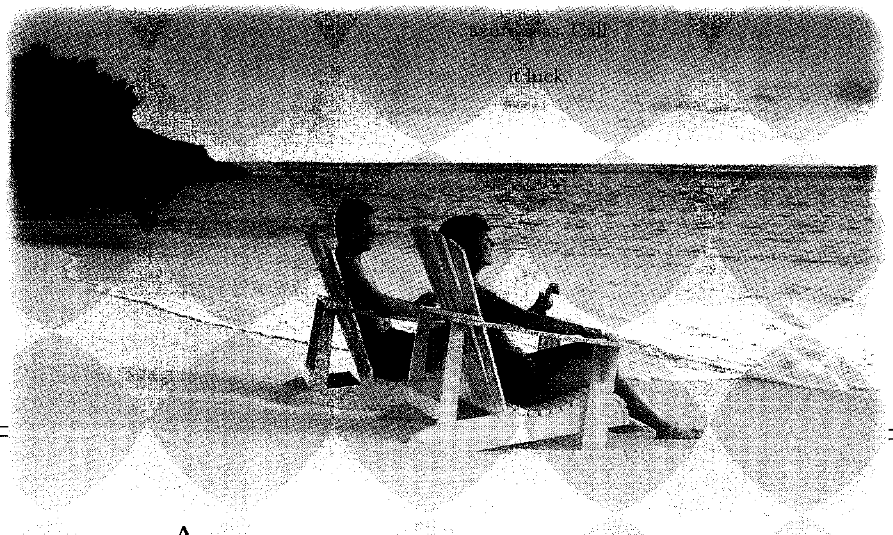

BERMUDA. A SHORT TRIP TO THE PERFECT HOLIDAY.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

IF stories about "lunches" in Hollywood or Washington leave you cold, yet you crave an occasional helping of gossip as much as the next person, come with us to Paris. We'd convene our school for scandal there any day, as long as that day broke sometime during the first two or three decades of this century, and as long as the life under inspection was an artist's. Whom to choose! The male-brothel visits of Proust and the after-hours activities of Josephine Baker never fail to titillate, though stories about both have perhaps grown stale from retelling. Copy about Colette and Modigliani, both subjects of current Off Broadway plays, is perhaps hotter. Or at least threatening to heat up: another biography of the French novelist is under way (by Judith Thurman, author of "Isak Dinesen"), and a stream of books about the Italian painter has just been published.

Modigliani is no stranger to scrutiny. The first biography of him was published in 1926, just six years after his death. Written by the French critic André Salmon, it gave ample account of the painter's short, sensational life—the sex, the booze, the drugs. The book's original title was "Modigliani, Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre." When the volume was reissued, more than thirty years later, the decidedly more contemporary publisher went all the way: "La Vie Passionnée de Modigliani." Dennis McIntyre's play about the artist, which is being presented by the Jewish Repertory Theatre (344 East 14th Street; through May 12), is also a reissue of sorts: it's called "Modigliani"—the same sober title it sported for its first New York production, in 1979.

"Colette Collage: Two Musicals About Colette" has had two previous stagings. The first, in 1982, closed out of town. For the second, produced locally a year later, by the York Theatre Company, many of the original songs were dropped. It's anyone's guess what the work's authors, Tom Jones (book and lyrics) and Harvey Schmidt (music), have retained for the latest version, presented by Musical Theatre Works (at the Theatre at St. Peter's; through May 19). At least a modicum of scandal, we trust.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Breaking Legs—Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia have the leads in a new comedy by Tom Dulack. John Tillinger directed. In previews. Opens May 9 at 8. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Casanova—A new play by Constance Congdon, directed by Michael Greif. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **WALKING THE DEAD**, a new play by Keith Curran. Scotty Bloch, Ashley Gardner, Joe Mantello, Christopher Shaw, Cotter Smith, Myra Taylor, and Tyrone Wilson make up the cast. Previews through May 11. Opens May 12 at 7:30. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Fayebird—A new play by Diane Amsterdam, presented by the American Jewish Theatre. Previews through May 12. Opens May 14 at 8. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

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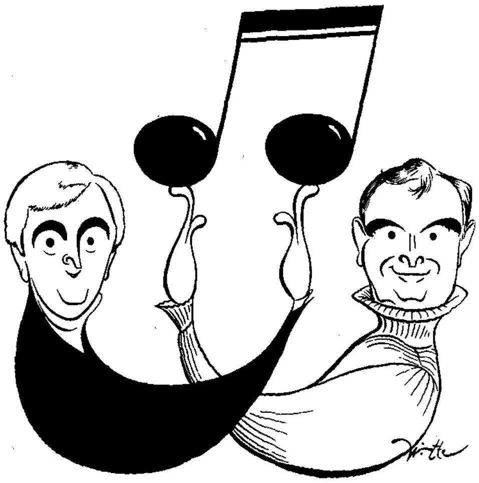
Fifty Million Frenchmen—A concert version of Cole Porter's 1929 musical. Evans Haile conducts the Orchestra of New England, and the singers include Peggy Cass, Kim Criswell, Jason Graae, Howard McGillin, and Karen Ziëmba. Directed by Larry Carpenter. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 9 at 7, a benefit performance; May 11 at 8; and May 12 at 3 and 7.)

Fridays—A 1981 play by Andrew Johns, with Henderson Forsythe and John Peakes. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company and directed by Gus Kaikkonen. In previews. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)



John Kander and Fred Ebb
("And the World Goes 'Round")

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—Everett Quinton's new show, which is billed as "a quasimusical." In previews. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Letters to a Student Revolutionary—A play by Elizabeth Wong, presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. Previews through May 14. Opens May 15 at 8. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

Mr. Gogol and Mr. Preen—A new comedy by Elaine May, with W. H. Macy, Mike Nussbaum, and Zohra Lampert. Directed by Gregory Mosher. Previews begin May 10. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui—John Turturro and David Patrick Kelly star in a production of Brecht's play. Preview on May 7. Opens May 8 at 7. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

States of Shock—A new play by Sam Shepard, starring John Malkovich. Bill Hart was the director. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

The Stick Wife—A play by Darrah Cloud about the wives of three Birmingham Klansmen. With Michael Countryman, Lindsay Crouse, Lanny Flaherty, Murphy Guyer, Margo Martindale, and Julie White. Previews May 7-8. Opens May 9 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

The Way of the World—A modern-dress version of Congreve's play, directed by David Greenspan. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Advice from a Caterpillar—The brat-pack actress Ally Sheedy is perfectly awful in this rather effortful comedy by Douglas Carter Beane. Mr. Beane is the stage doorman uptown at the Neil Simon Theatre (in case you want to stick your head in). Despite some nifty work by Harley Venton, Dennis Christopher, and David Lansbury—and solid direction from David's father, Edgar—the evening is not a great success. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/15/91.) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziëmba. Andrea Green fills in for Miss Ziëmba on May 9 and May 11-12. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Black Eagles—Leslie Lee's play about the Tuskegee Airmen, black fliers during the Second World War who were trained to escort bombers manned by white pilots, and who were eventually allowed to become bomber pilots themselves, seems at first to be just a random set of scenes, but the pressure of emotion underneath gives the drama force and coherence. With Graham Brown, Reggie Montgomery, and David Rainey, among other good actors. The show was conceived and directed by Ricardo Khan. (5/6/91) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes May 19.)

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and staging are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

The Good Times Are Killing Me—The cartoonist Lynda Barry has devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship between two little girls, one white, the other black, and they are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Also with Kim Staunton, Wendell Pierce, and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Gypsy—The Tyne Daly-led revival of the Laurents-Styne-Sondheim musical returns to Broadway. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Haunted Host—Harvey Fierstein and Jason Workman star in a revival of Robert Patrick's 1964 comedy. "Pouf Positive," a new play by Mr. Patrick, is the curtain-raiser. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

I Hate Hamlet—In Paul Rudnick's jokey farce, Nicol Williamson gives a stunning comedy performance as the ghost of John Barrymore, summoned to aid a young Hollywood actor who has been booked to play Hamlet in the Park. Mr. Williamson is ably supported by some of the other actors, but the show boils down to a marvellous solo turn. (4/22/91) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Ivy Rowe—Barbara Bates Smith in a one-woman show adapted from Lee Smith's novel "Fair and Tender Ladies." Directed by Mark Hunter. (Provincetown, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting three plays in rotating repertory: Shakespeare's **JULIUS CAESAR** (through May 19) and a double bill of Georg Büchner's **WOYZECK** and **LEONCE AND LENA** (through May 18). (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jeffrey Essmann's Artificial Reality—A one-man show. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200. Closes May 11.)

Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in New York

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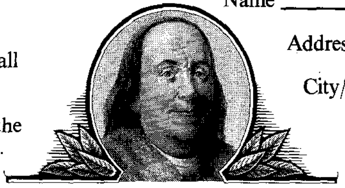

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Member $45 Billion Franklin Group of Funds during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

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Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

Modigliani—A revival of Dennis McIntyre's play, with Ronald Guttman as the artist. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667. Closes May 12.)

Monster in a Box—A quick return engagement of Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. May 12, May 19-20, and May 26-27.)

The Old Boy—A new play by A. R. Gurney, with Stephen Collins. Directed by John Rubinstein. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Only the Truth Is Funny—The comedian Rick Reynolds' one-man show. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Our Country's Good—A play by Timberlake Wertenbaker, set in eighteenth-century Australia. Produced here under the auspices of the Broadway Alliance, the show has also been done in London and Hartford. Directed by Mark Lamos. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100.)

Penn & Teller's Refrigerator Tour—The heavenly twain meet again. The new tricks are just as mysterious (and frightening) as the old ones. As for the tricksters, their bogus candor is intact, and they've never been funnier. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

A Room of One's Own—Eileen Atkins is sublime in this stage adaptation of the Virginia Woolf essay. Easily the most civilized entertainment on offer, this one-woman show is something every lively-minded young woman above the age of fifteen—fourteen if she's particularly lively-minded—will want to see. (3/18/91) (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Secret Garden—Mandy Patinkin and Daisy Eagan lead the cast of a new musical based on the Frances Hodgson Burnett classic. Marsha Norman wrote the book and the lyrics, and Lucy Simon provided the score. Susan H. Schulman directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

The Substance of Fire—Ron Rifkin gives an impeccable performance as a publisher—a refugee from Nazi Germany—whose difficulties with his grown children are no greater than those with himself. The play, by Jon Robin Baitz, is not flawless, but it is consistently absorbing and very well acted, under the direction of Daniel Sullivan. With Sarah Jessica Parker, Patrick Breen, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. (4/1/91) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

The Will Rogers Follies—A new musical, starring Keith Carradine. The book is by Peter Stone, the score by Cy Coleman, and the lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

cats: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **city of angels:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one this month. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **other people's money:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **prelude to a kiss:** Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.) . . . **six degrees of separation:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **smoke on the mountain:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

Eleanor King, who died earlier this year, was a longtime dancer with the modern-dance company run by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. Eventually, she branched out as a solo performer of her own choreography. From films of her dancing made by Thomas Bouchard in the forties one can see that her performances combined a fine lyric instinct and a hearty roughness of execution. For audiences of the time, the effect could be curiously spiritual. "Almost always Miss King seems to dance in an envelope," the sculptor and critic Richard Lippold wrote of her in a 1946 issue of *Dance Observer*, "but it is a transparent one which moves plastically with the dimensions of her emotion."

Lippold was reviewing a performance of King's 1944 solo, "Moon Dances," which he identified as his favorite item on the program. It was King's favorite of her own works, too. The dancer and choreographer Annabelle Gamson learned this in 1988, while she was reconstructing "Moon Dances" for Sue Bernhard, a dancer in her own chamber-size company, Dance Solos; King sat in the studio during rehearsals. At that time King also told Miss Gamson that the images in the dance evoking rhythmic cycles and an infant in arms were related to a miscarriage that King had suffered. "I never asked her more about it," Miss Gamson said, "but it would certainly help to account for the emotional intensity of the dance and for the madness in it."

We asked Miss Gamson what the challenges of the revival were.

"Eleanor came to dancing late," Miss Gamson said, "and although her training was O.K., and her own dancing was extremely expressive, it did not have a lot of finesse. There's a certain amateurish quality that goes very well with her dances, yet, if anything, *I'm* overly nuanced. So I don't know whether I wrecked 'Moon Dances' or made it better. But when you reconstruct something, you do know more than the person who made it. When I put together Eleanor's pieces, I had to learn where they were coming from. She didn't in order to create them. They were direct for her, wordless. They're full of language for me."

"Moon Dances" will be part of an homage to Eleanor King that Dance Solos will present on May 12 at the 92nd Street Y.

New York City Ballet—May 7 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Eight Easy Pieces," "Eight More," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Eight Easy Pieces," "Eight More," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Ives, Songs," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Fearful Symmetries," and "La Valse." . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Bugaku," "Ives, Songs," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ May 12 at 1: "Mozartiana," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ May 12 at 7: "Raymonda Variations," "Ives, Songs," and "La Valse." . . . ¶ May 14 at 8: "Bugaku," "Mozartiana," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 15 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Dances at a Gathering." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 30.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 6 at 8: "Push Comes to Shove," "Nine Sinatra Songs," and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ May 7-9 at 8: "Ballet Imperial," "Pillar of Fire," and "Rodeo." . . . ¶ May 10 at 8, May 11 at 2 and 8, May 13-14 at 8, and May 15 at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ May 15 at 8: "Ballet Imperial," "Pillar of Fire," and "Rodeo." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 22.)

Ralph Lemon Company—A one-week engagement. Program A: May 7 and May 9 at 8, May 11 at 2, and May 12 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Program B: May 8 and May 10-11 at 8, and May 12 at 2. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Chen & Dancers—Presenting "Back Street" (première), "Lemon Moon," and other works. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. May 9 at 7:30.)

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NIGHT LIFE

FOR a long time now, coffee hasn't been the only thing brewing across the Hudson. The Maxwell House Factory may not be much longer for this world, but Hoboken's alternative-music scene, which has been going strong for over a decade, is alive and well. Yo La Tengo's last effort was a dark-horse gem, the Feelies are on the march with a new release, and now Chris Stamey and Peter Holsapple, two of the town's favorite sons, have teamed up on a new record. The pair are originally from North Carolina, but they've been minor deities in Hoboken ever since forming the dB's there, in 1978, and by now they probably merit their own wing at the Clam Broth House. The other night, the Knitting Factory hosted a coming-out party for the new record, titled "Mavericks," and just about the entire Hoboken glitterati (an oxymoron?) showed up to lend support.

"Mavericks" marks a reunion for Stamey and Holsapple, who went their separate ways in 1982, after the dB's had released two critically acclaimed albums. (Stamey left to pursue a solo career; Holsapple continued with the dB's and is an unofficial member of R.E.M.) Their performance at the Knitting Factory struck a note of continuity: the new material is the same variety of thoughtful, inventive pop that they produced over a decade ago. The songwriting is, as ever, subtle; you're not likely to walk out of one of their shows humming a chorus. Lyrically, Stamey and Holsapple pretty much stick to pop's natural subject: relationships. The words tend to have a melancholy twist, but they're also witty and refreshingly short on easy cynicism. Playing acoustic guitars and, more often than not, singing in harmony, the pair summoned the spirits of sixties folk, Alex Chilton (in his Big Star days), and some of pop's revered songwriting teams. Their band, a quintet, included Dave Schramm on pedal-steel guitar; his occasional solos gave the group a welcome jolt of electricity.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

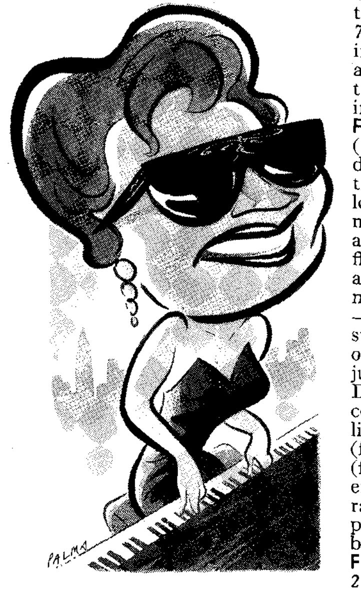
Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slighty decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The sly British comedian **JULIAN CLARY** is at work here through May 12, and the comedy-and-song troupe Dallas Wise Guys starts up on May 14. **MARNI NIXON,** a fine, precise soprano who's still best known for dubbing songs in "My Fair Lady," "West Side Story," and "The King and I," is here on May 7, as well as every Sunday this month. Her show includes music by Hoagy Carmichael and Sheldon Harnick, along with the requisite highlights from her long-gone dubbing days. Show times vary.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. Saxophonist **JOHNNY GRIFFIN** leads a quartet May 10-11; the Mundell Lowe trio begins work on May 13. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? The gravel-voiced singer-pianist **DR. JOHN** appears with a quartet May 7-12; the singer-pianist **DIANE SCHUUR** starts a week-long gig, backed by a trio, on May 14. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. **BLUE RODEO,** a Canadian outfit that's currently gaining momentum around these parts, is the quintessential bar band. They play tight, bright sets that alternate between Greg Keelor's brash, shit-kicking rock and Jim Cuddy's smooth, melodic, straight-ahead country. The group will be here on May 7. **BUSTER POINDEXTER** appears on May 8, and there's a songwriters' roundtable—to be attended by **DONALD FAGEN** and **AL KOOPER,** among others—on May 9. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to pianist-singer **BOBBY SHORT** until late June. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.



Diane Schuur at the Blue Note

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, from eight to midnight, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. The **LYNN OLIVER** orchestra plays on May 12. May 14 belongs to the sixties-tinged, guitar-driven pop band **SCHOOL OF FISH,** who recently released a self-titled début album.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. May 7-8, **JOEY RAMONE** hosts a showcase of his favorite unsigned bands. May 10-11 belongs to **AN EMOTIONAL FISH,** a Dublin-based rock band that surfaced on U2's record label, Mother Records. (Hothouse Flowers were also graduates of that finishing school.) The group writes solid, well-crafted songs, some edgy and sardonic, some light as air. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Veteran tenor-sax man **JIMMY HEATH** is in evidence May 7-12, with a quartet. The virtuosic soprano **MORGANA KING** begins a stretch on May 14. Music after nine.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the bar-and-restaurant also features a corrugated-tin ceiling and a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—An Irish pub in the meat-packing district, not too far from the boondocks. In the front room, barbirds study the TV and growl about one thing or another, and in the back room another crowd listens to Irish folk musicians (on Fridays) and native string bands (on Saturdays). On May 10, button accordionist Patty Conway leads a quartet; and the bluegrass duo of Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin performs on May 11.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. The Latin-jazz pianist **MICHEL CAMILO** is on hand for two weeks beginning May 7. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—Formerly a dive bar called McCarthy's, this two-floor establishment looks as if it had been dynamited and rebuilt from the ashes up. On the ground floor is a well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features—pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports—and a few of the near-classics: a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis. Downstairs is a low-ceilinged space that looks like a rec room; on weekends (from eleven) and Tuesdays (from nine) it's home to an enlightened mixture of garage-rock, rockabilly, surf-punk, and psychedelic-rock bands.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business people and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find trombonist **AL GREY,** May 7-12. Grey, who has been leading his own ensembles for some time now, built his reputation as a soloist with Count Basie's big band, an association that stretched across three decades. A trio composed of saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM,** pianist **LYNN ARRIELE,** and bassist **BOB CRANSHAW** commences on May 14. Music from six-thirty.

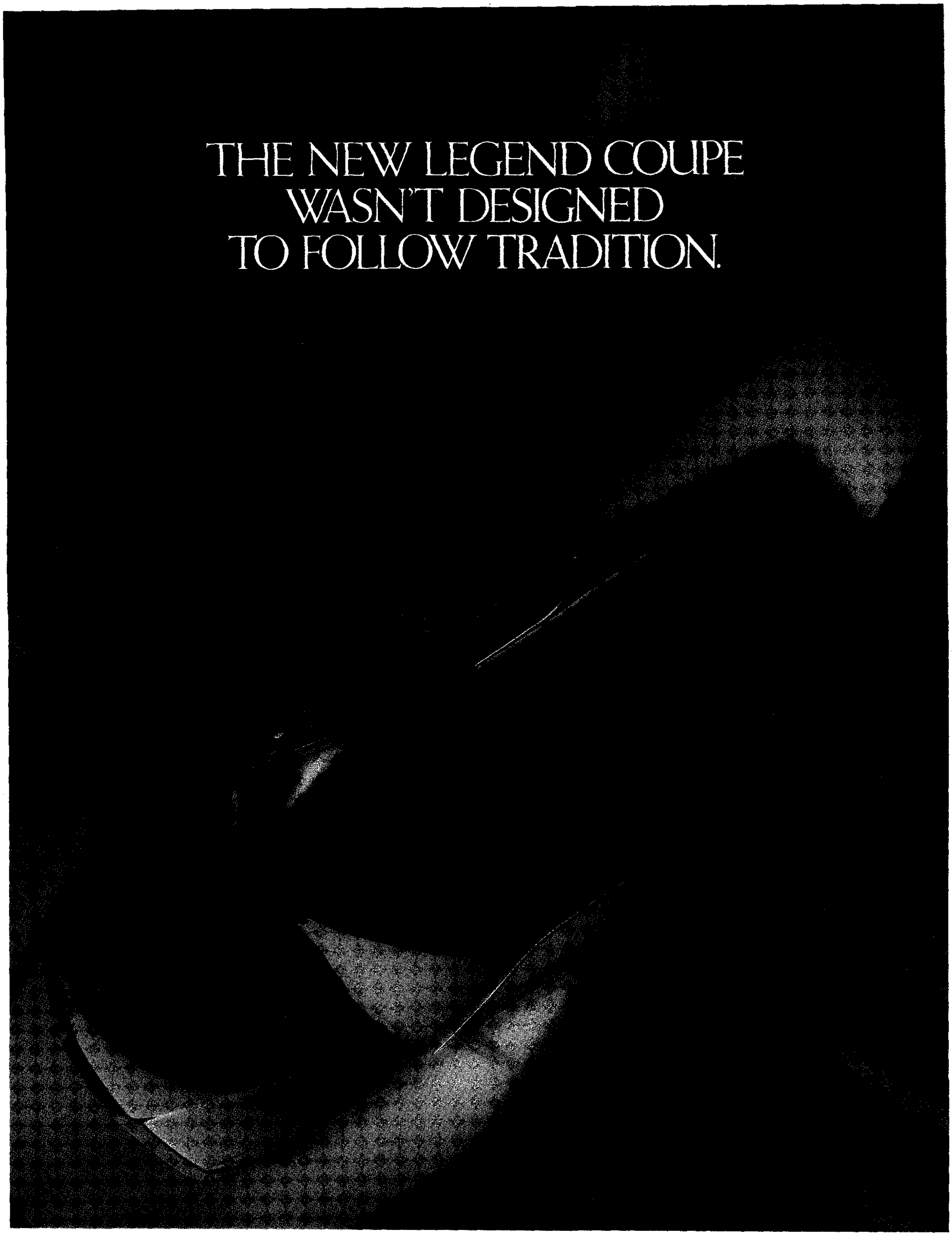
Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond-wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC.

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. Music from eleven-thirty.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. A couple of piano-bass teams are doing the entertaining this week: **BILL MAYS** and **RAY DRUMMOND** perform May 8-11; **JOHN HICKS** and **DON PATE** are at work May 15-16. Music from about nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. The hard-driving avant-garde pianist **CECIL TAYLOR,** who told a reporter not long ago, "I'm still living on the edge," leads a sextet May 9-11. The Ohio-based all-female rock combo **SCRAWL** claims May 15. Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restau-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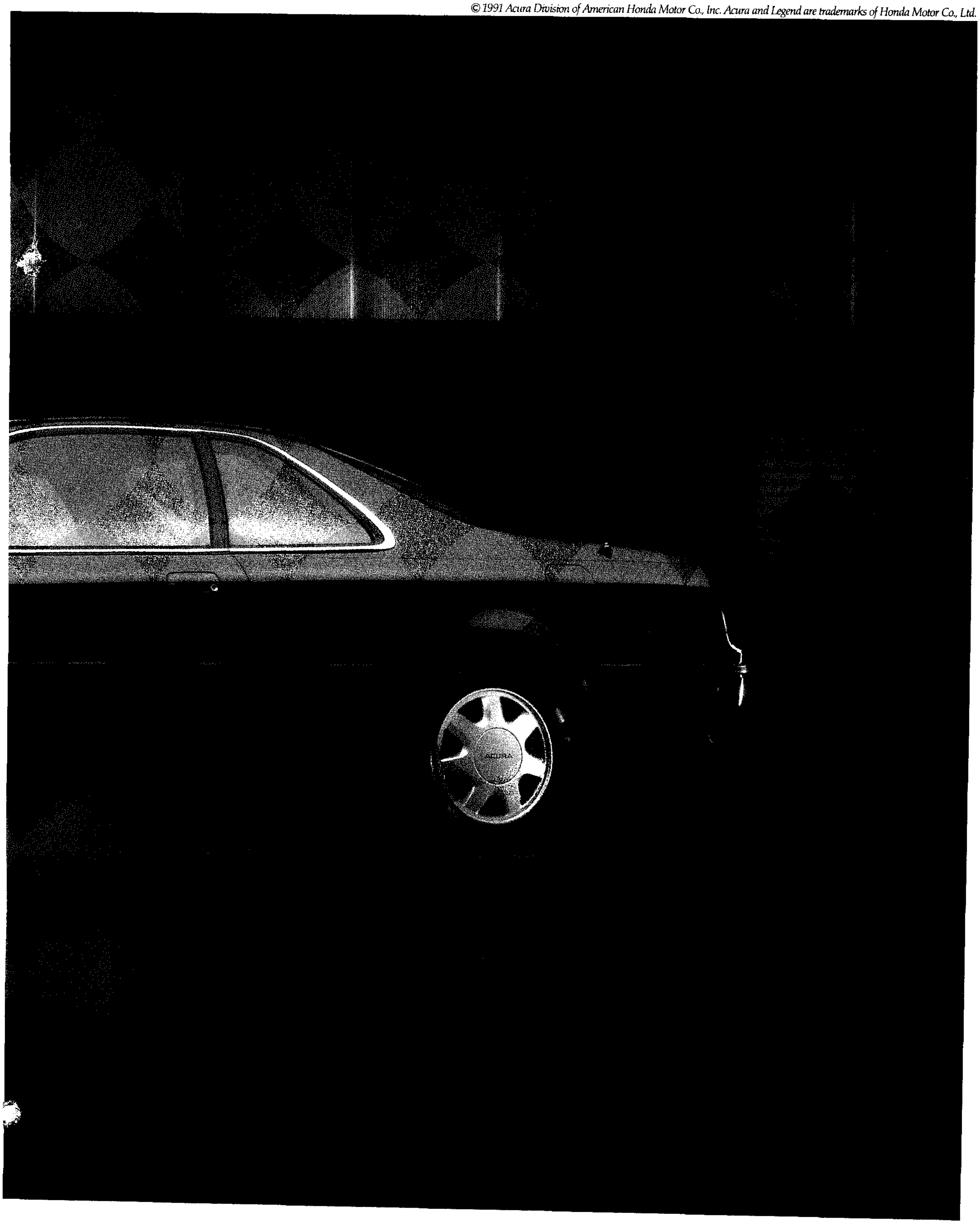

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rant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was once heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." A regular rotation of bands perform weekdays from five-thirty to eight, with no cover charge. **MUMBO GUMBO** claims the Thursday spot; the quartet, whose members play, at various times, accordion, fiddle, bass, guitar, and mandolin, offer a nice mixture of blues, folk, and country. Dining.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A fairly new black-on-black rock club. The patrons are twentyish and pretty well behaved. There's not always enough elbowroom for such things as stage diving, but somebody usually does it anyway. The Seattle music scene—which a few years back, before the big labels wised up, might have been called the Seattle indie scene—has been getting its share of attention lately. The majority of the young bands that have popped up believe in the louder-is-better ethic, with an emphasis on acid-rock guitars. The **SCREAMING TREES,** who perform here on May 11, are no exception. (They're actually from Ellensburg, Washington, but that's close enough for most trend-spotters.) Their recently released big-label début album, "Uncle Anesthesia," is a raunchy, headlong stomp that's often melodic but never pretty.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Where you can always smell the stogies. Jelly Roll Morton—whose business card billed him as the "creator of ragtime" and to whom is attributed the famous remark "I invented jazz in 1902"—and his Red Hot Peppers are the subject of a celebration here just now. For anyone needing a refresher course on the late pianist's work, RCA recently released an exhaustive multi-disk set of his Victor recordings, and Marcus Roberts tipped his hat Morton's way a couple of times on his latest record, "Alone with Three Giants." Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot*. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" The Brooklyn-born singer and actress **LAINIE KAZAN** continues her engagement here through May 11. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** a swellegant big band that re-creates the look and sound of a thirties outfit, and that seems to know every song written between the Armistice and D-Day, is here every Tuesday. Show times vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—The Marlboro Music Festival has swung its country self into town again: **MARTY STUART** performs here on May 8 at eight, and **ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL, DELBERT MC CLINTON,** and **LEE ROY PARNELL** hold forth on May 11 at nine.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "*Manhattan*" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to score. Last fall, after a long slumber, the Tea Room's small, red-gold-and-green cabaret reopened with a series of performances. **MARLENE VER PLANCK,** who'll be appearing here on May 12, has spent a good deal of the last two decades in the studio, where she recorded, among other things, "Weekends were made for Michelob" and "At McDonald's, we do it all for you." As a backup vocalist, she has lent her voice to both Frank Sinatra and Kiss. Shows Saturdays at eight and, depending on demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** and **EKAYA** are here through May 12; the **NAT ADDERLEY** sextet begins a week-long stay on May 14. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that has become an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a little slicker and a lot roomier than the original Tramps. On May 14, there will be a benefit that will include performances by the **JOAN OSBORNE** band, the **SURREAL MC COYS, LOUP GAROU,** and the **BLUE CHIEFTAINS.**

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce. The décor is a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The **CHARLES MC PHERSON** *quartet is here through May 12, and the* **JACKIE MC CLEAN** quintet starts up on May 14. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

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AVIARIES

Laura Foreman is an artist who designs birdhouses. Strike from your mind the plywood boards you banged together in woodshop a million years ago. Foreman is a virtuoso. Her birdhouses are luxury retreats—dream homes—intended for New York City's sparrow population. Her tenants must excite the envy of their peers; they live in single-family houses with miniature air-conditioners, television antennas, windows, porches, and shingled roofs. They have a life style.

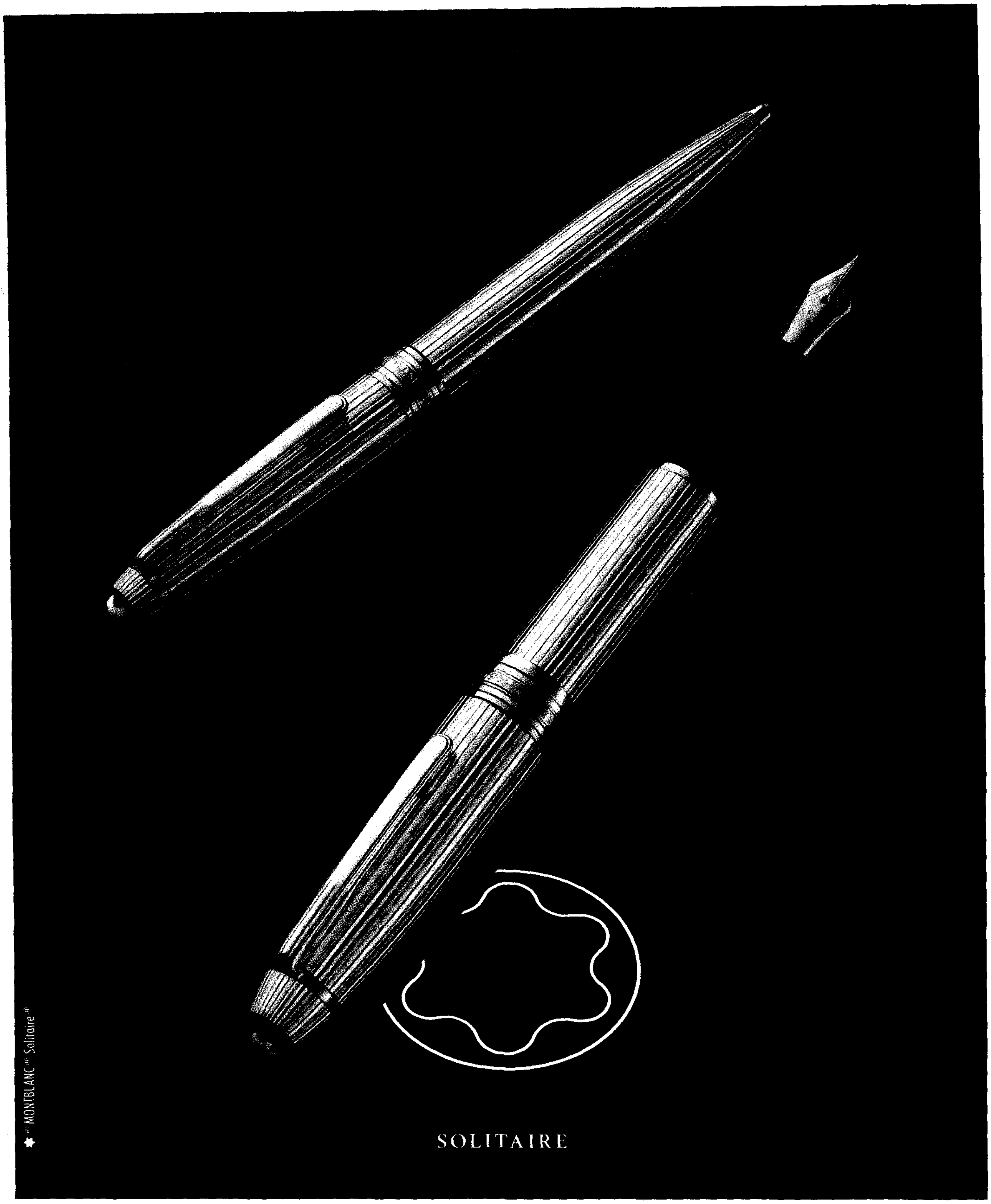
Foreman installed five birdhouses in neighborhood parks last year, and young bird couples are just beginning to move in. "They're, like, very skeptical," laughed Foreman, during a recent informal birdhouse tour. "They're saying, 'I can't believe this: A free apartment in New York?' " At the "Tenement Birdhouse," in the Clinton Community Garden, on West 48th Street near Ninth Avenue, two sparrows flitted around, surveying the paint job (lemon yellow with turquoise fire escapes). One settled on the TV antenna, which doubles as a perch. The "Funky Birdhouse," in El Jardin del Paraiso, on East 5th Street near Avenue C, presides over a tumbledown garden, where the plots are divided by painted rocks and old ornamental moldings. The house has a dilapidated veranda, graffiti-covered walls, and a roof tiled with bits of ceramic taken from abandoned buildings nearby. The sparrows that move in there will probably enjoy salsa music and Saturday-afternoon barbecues. Three blocks away, in a grassy park on East 8th Street, the "Gazebo Birdhouse"—complete with weathervane and latticework siding—sits on a metal pole high above the gazebo it replicates. It brings to mind summer weddings, pool parties, and bandstand concerts. Certainly, none of Foreman's tenants will ever again be satisfied with a nook in some dank air shaft.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE fleet was in. Not ours—it's due next month. No, two weekends ago hundreds of *French* marines docked in Manhattan's port. During the day, they scattered anywhere there was a photo opportunity or a short skirt. Yet it was easier to find them in the dark. No sonar or searchlights were necessary, just the glow from the red neon at 311 West 51st Street that has spelled out Tout Va Bien for more than forty years.

On Sunday, near midnight, when all the other restaurants in the area had chairs on top of their tables, this most authentic of bistros did, too. But there were sailors in them. Sailors in the front room. Sailors in the back room. At the bar. On the banquettes. In the aisles. The only shapes to break up this sea of blue-and-white middies (it looked as if they had bought out Ralph Lauren's last fall collection) were several cheerfully willing, blowsy women, and the requisite number of bottles of Bordeaux needed to toast not only them, but France, the waitresses, the chef, the sailors' mothers, and the sailors themselves with unrelenting frequency. "They have been here for days," said one of the restaurant's unflappable French waitresses. "Friday I left at 2 A.M. They were still here. Saturday they stayed until 6 A.M. Today I came in after lunch and they were saying hello. I think maybe they can't get up."

How they wound up at Tout Va Bien is a very complicated story involving the restaurant's owner, Jean-Pierre, which got muddled in translation. The sailors didn't want to talk, anyway. They wanted to hug ("You know, these men are *very* fickle," warned one woman to her freshly squeezed girlfriend. "Sure, they love you now, but later—" Her train of thought was broken by an officer falling on her from the left) and they wanted to sing. There were odes to hunted bunnies, paeans to white wine, salutes to food, songs of the sea, songs of home, limericks too dirty for anyone to explain, five attempts at "Alouette" that never got past "je te plumerai la gorge," and a resounding version of "La Marseillaise" that would have disrupted a performance of "Les Mis" six blocks away had it been a little earlier and on another night. "When was the last time you sang your national anthem because you wanted to?" asked one squeezed lady of another. "O.K., so they are a little, you know," said a waitress, "but I love it. They are so patriotic."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Cirque du Soleil—Aerialists, clowns, jugglers, and contortionists *avec une différence.* (Battery Park City. Through May 19. For further information, call 509-5550.)

P. S. 122—The Veselka Festival. May 7 at 8: Latino films and videos. . . . ¶ May 9-12 at 8: "For Crying Out Loud," a collaboration between Rocky Bornstein and Frank Conversano, with music by Blue Gene Tyranny. . . . ¶ May 9-12 at 9:30: Michael Kaniecki in a one-man show. . . . ¶ May 9-12 at 10: "The Bribe," a work in progress by Mabou Mines. With music by John Zorn, lyrics by Terry O'Reilly, and direction by Ruth Maleczech. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

Shigeko Kubota was in the second grade when her home town, Niigata, originally targeted for a bomb, was passed over because weather conditions favored Nagasaki instead. In 1968, she met her hero, Marcel Duchamp, on a plane rerouted from Buffalo to Rochester because of a blizzard. These dates with chance may have something to do with the fact that Kubota's video sculptures and concrete poems are introspective and quite madly matter-of-fact, aleatory as well as technological. As Brooks Adams points out in a buoyant introduction to the life and work of this Fluxus avatar, Kubota's "Eve" has a video womb. She also has an "Adam" with a video gut, and the astral pair, revolving at different speeds in their rock-and-video garden, are among the many highlights of a retrospective on view through September 15 at the American Museum of the Moving Image (35th Avenue at 36th Street, Astoria).

The atmosphere pervading Kubota's two floors—one lit low, the other brightly—suggests a metaphysical World's Fair. Psychedelic avian patterns flicker across the sixteen monitors of the beautiful, blue-mirrored "Video Byobu III (Birds)" (1991), while, nearby, stencilled letters proclaim the artist's *cri de guerre*: "Video Is Vengeance of Vagina / Video Is Victory of Vagina / Video Is Venereal Disease of Intellectuals / Video Is Vacant Apart-ment / Video Is Vacation of Art / Viva Video. . . ."

Kubota's themes, often entwined, also include the American West, death, and, especially, Duchamp. To her, "Duchamp is Old Faithful for art." Inside "Duchampiana: Door" (1976-77)—a reconstruction of the famous trick-door corner of Duchamp's studio—are video portraits of both geezer and geyser, and three homages to his "Bicycle Wheel" have tiny TVs attached to the spokes.

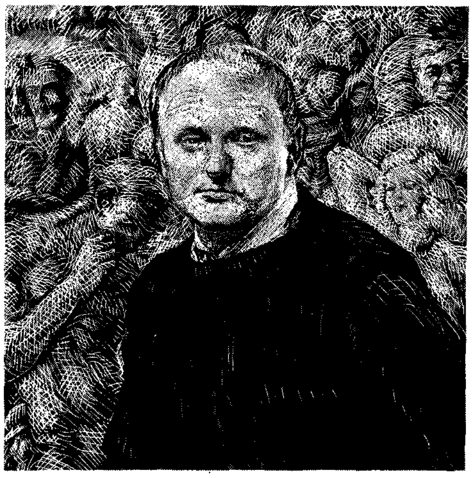
Kubota, who has lived in New York since 1964, and is married to Nam June Paik, says "I like video because it is heavy." Because video is such a Sisyphean sport, credit is due to JoAnn Hanley, for seeing this wonderful exhibition through. Also to Mary Jane Jacob, for editing the essential catalogue, which includes an exemplary document by Professor Moira Roth, and a long string of Kubota's baroque verbal pearls. Viva Kubota!

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Sculpture of Indonesia" includes more than a hundred and thirty-five bronzes, life-size stone sculptures, and ceremonial objects dating from the eighth century to the fifteenth. . . . ¶ A large *exhibition of paintings,* drawings, and etchings by Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). Also on view is a previously unpublished sketchbook from Delacroix's 1828 trip to Touraine. Through June 16. . . . ¶ "The Fauve Landscape" brings together nearly a hundred and twenty-five paintings made between 1904 and 1908 by Derain, Matisse, Braque, and their circle of friends. Through May 19. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Air," a thirty-two-foot-long stainless-steel fabric sculpture by the fibre artist Kyoko Kumai, is the latest installation in the "Projects" series. Through June 18. . . . ¶ "Ben Franklin Dreams the New World," a video installation by Peter Rose. Through May 12. (Daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn.



Reginald Marsh at the New York Public Library

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial: work by artists whose stars began to rise in the fifties and sixties is on the second floor; work by artists who emerged in the seventies and eighties is on the third floor; and work by late-eighties and nineties artists is on the fourth floor. The "AIDS Timeline," by Group Material, is in the lobby. Through June 16. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Leon Golub's first three-dimensional installation, titled "WorldWide," employs photographic details from his wall-size canvases, reproduced onto transparent sheets of plastic. Through June 16. . . . ¶ A display of Impressionist paintings and works on paper, titled "Monet and His Contemporaries." Included are five works by Monet, and others by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, van Gogh, and Picasso. Through June 2. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm spathes, raffia, and bamboo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A show that examines the ecosystems of tropical rain forests around the world, such as those in the Congo basin, the Amazon basin, and Borneo. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—An exhibition focussing on one painting: an early Choson-dynasty (1392-1910) Korean Buddhist triad depicting Sakyamuni with two attending bodhisattvas. Also on view are sixty related paintings and sculptures. Through July 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"The Nearest Edge of the World," an exhibition of works in several mediums by nine contemporary artists from Cuba. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—Forty-one examples of ancient Chinese bronze vessels, weapons, and personal ornaments ranging from the Erlitou era (nineteenth century B.C.) to the Han dynasty (third century A.D.). Through June 15. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The museum's collection—begun in 1896 by the three Hewitt sisters, Amy, Eleanor, and Sarah—is ably represented by "A Design Resource," a show of seven hundred objects. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"From Pontormo to Seurat," a show of sixty-one drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago, including works by Gainsborough, Géricault, Redon, Delacroix, and Degas. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—A hundred and six examples of contemporary American bookbinding by such artists as Donald Glaister, Deborah Evetts, and Michael Wilcox. Through June 6. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Mozart: Prodigy of Nature." A comprehensive exhibition of all things Mozart, including more than fifty manuscripts—from four pieces composed at age five to a first draft of his Requiem; early letters home from his first trip to Italy (December 1769), and his last letter to his father (April 1787); and the composer's own "Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke" ("Catalogue of All My Works"), which he kept for the last seven years of his life. Starts May 8. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century drawings by the Venetian masters Tiepolo, Guardi, and Canaletto. Starts May 8. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's "Annual Exhibition" includes more than a hundred and fifty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and watercolors. Through May 12. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show of fifty paintings, drawings, photographs, and decorative objects that were collected by Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). . . . ¶ "Justice Rendered" is an exhibition of more than forty documents and art works related to the three-hundred-year history of the New York Supreme Court. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Sixty-three prints by Reginald Marsh (1898-1954), depicting New York scenes from the twenties and thirties. Through June 29. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

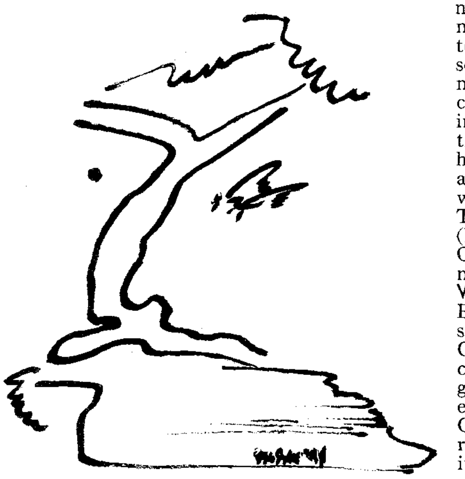
Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of works by Romare Bearden (1912-88), which includes a hundred and forty-one oils, collages, and watercolors. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

James Lee Byars—A group of sculptures on pedestals, in blue African granite—a sort of lower-grade lapis lazuli that to the 1991 eye is apt to seem quite Trumpish. Their shapes evoke the letters of a cosmic alphabet, without seeming to have a specific meaning or karma. Byars, it would seem, is keyed into post-hippie aristocrats, latter-day northern-European spiritualists, and other New Age garden-club types. Through May 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Short List—**VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN**, Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through May 26); **JEAN DUBUFFET**, Elkon, 18 E. 81st St. (through June 8); **ROBERT MOTHERWELL**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 28); **MARINA STERN**, Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through May 11); **JOE ZUCKER**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through May 28).



Self-portrait by Robert Lobe

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Nicholas Africano—Although this artist was reared in the Midwest, his sensibility is pure Italian. In these deeply Romantic paintings, he depicts subjects with a mythological presence. Several have a Daphne-esque dimension, portraying women partially transformed into trees. These are nearly monochromatic, and the figures emerge from earthen browns, as if given form in a dust storm. A life-size sculpture of a woman with a marble body, a glass head, and wood arms is simply breathtaking, with the pathos of opera. Through May 25. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Richard Anuskiewicz—In these revisionist times, one might hope that new work would offer a fresh perspective on this Op painter, whose credibility has been on the wane for about two decades. That hope is not fulfilled. As if to compensate for the inherent blandness of these reliefs, most done in wood, the artist has aggressively colored them in hostile Op-like ways that produce less a war of color than an inevitable audience retreat. Through May 18. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) and **John Marin** (1870-1953)—A show that is ostensibly about trees. Both artists had a magical relationship to landscape, but in very different ways. Marin veered toward the abstract—he portrays a nervous and intensely personalized version of Feininger's post-Cubist space—and his work tends to suffer from redundancy. Not so with Burchfield. He is well known for his bleak street scenes of Buffalo and Ohio, a few of which are on display here, but his landscapes are the best works in the show. Some are inhabited by spirits, with trees drooping in a vaguely ghoulish way from the weight of winter snow; some are simply loaded with anxiety. Through May 25. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**PIERRE ALECHINSKY** (through May 31) and **HELEN FRANKENTHALER** (through May 11); Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.; **NORMAN BLUHM**, Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 31); **GEORGE CONDO**, Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through May 24); **JEANNE DUVAL**, French, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 25); **SIDNEY GOODMAN**, Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 11); **WALT KUHN** and **HUGH STEERS**, Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 31); **ARNALDO ROCHE RABELL**, Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 28); **GEORGE SEGAL**, Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 8); **ANTONI TÀPIES**, Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 25); **MICHAEL TETHEROW**, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 1).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Howard Ben Tré—Very elegant large glass sculptures, with an occasional steel element, whose forms refer to the ancient world—a double amphora, an axe blade, a flint stone. These objects—feats of glass casting, perhaps, but not of sculpture—seem best suited to a high-style showroom. Through May 25. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Kevin Carter—Perhaps everybody has fantasized about attending his or her own funeral. In this installation, Carter stages the funeral of his signature. A coffin holding a cast of the artist is strewn with slides of his past performances; behind it, his crossed-out signatures cover a photomural of the sky. But this is not just a burial of the mark of an artist's genius; a double-exposed photo of Carter and his wife also heralds an end to male supremacy, and addresses the very current theme of androgyny. A videotape of remembrances by Carter's family, including some reflections on the meaning of life, plays continuously. According to a press release, the contents of the exhibition will be buried, at a later date, somewhere in New Jersey. Through May 18. (Baer, 476 Broome St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

William N. Copley—Better known by his signature device: CPLY. The artist claims that this distinguishes him from the eighteenth-century Copley, but there is reason to suspect that it's simply an abbreviation for anything that has to do with copulation. This angel of mercy for the priapically inclined has indeed been spinning his very own personal satyricon into a sugar-coated yet salubrious yarn. The painting "Trust Lust," of a dapper little man dancing with a big buxom nude, on a flowered rug in a flower-papered room, is but one such savory parable. Copley's potions are derived from herbs from the gardens of rococo, Pop, and Surrealism. Through May 15. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Christian Eckart—Paintings that consist of four vertical stripes of different colors, surrounded by broad, shiny aluminum frames. The surfaces are luscious, like baked enamel, and the colors are juxtaposed in such a way that each looks great (paint chips should be presented this thoughtfully), but the over-all effect is completely uninteresting. These paintings, which share much with minimalism without taking on any of the issues, seem to be about great presentation, but they accomplish nothing beyond what one would expect from a good framer. Through May 25. (Rubin-Spangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Jackie Ferrara—It has been nearly five years since Ferrara has exhibited in New York, and, as these three very beautiful sculptures attest, the wait has been too long. As always, each work is a variation on a pyramid and is made of delicately stacked lengths of wood. Here the wood is poplar, with stained sections of sandstone red or gray. These quietly intelligent and architecturally suggestive works are built on a scale somewhere between buildings and models. Through May 18. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Mary Heilmann—Recent abstract paintings. This plentiful show is energetic and clearheaded. Many of the works on view are highly distilled seascapes and beachscapes—original in flavor, even though in part derived from Mondrian, Diebenkorn, and Al Held—and they seem to join forces to herald the picnic season. Heilmann's work may be commonsensical when it comes to gesture and materials, but it also conveys a certain subtle largesse: the combined attributes, in short, of great California cooking. She is, quite possibly, the Alice Waters of contemporary American art. Through May 18. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Magdalena Jetelová—Four strong works on paper, collectively titled "Diary of the Instant." They were made by burning soot onto the surface of very dark photographs whose subject is light. Through May 25. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Marlene McCarty—A powerful first solo show of three works, made up of thirty-four raw canvases butted edge to edge, with a single strip of words running continuously across the center. In one piece, called "Crash," the strip resembles a stripe on a towel, and the words mimic offensive car-culture lingo about women as sex machines ("She's an engine eatin' pit of destruction," "6000 pounds of thrust," and "Bend over I'll drive"). "Burn," in which the strip looks like a tire track, is all about the machismo of war. Through May 18. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Elie Nadelman (1882-1946)—This Polish-born artist has always been considered an American, but the many drawings in this show, roughly half of which were made before he emigrated here, in 1915, make his roots in European modernism—and particularly Cubism—quite clear. The show also includes three exquisite bronze sculptures. Through May 11. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

John Newman—A very handsome show of drawings by a sculptor who is perhaps better in this medium. Each drawing is of an eccentric biomorphic form, most of which loop back into themselves and are either joined in corkscrew or bellows shapes or broken into frayed strands or mercurial beads. Newman's skills are considerable and his use of color is exquisite, and in these works he shows himself to be a bit of a male Elizabeth Murray. But they seem to lack the sense of struggle that has contributed significantly to the strength of his earlier drawings; they seem marred by peacock pride. Through May 11. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Richard Prince—For the past decade and a half, Prince has enacted a particularly potent social terrorism with an art rooted in conceptual strategies. Known initially for appropriated photographs, primarily from advertising, that commodified gesture and desire, in recent years he has created paintings that conduct an often fascinating inquiry into the relevance of the medium. The six recent, large-scale paintings on display in this show are by far his most complex. They take on aspects of postwar painting—from the heroic scale of Ab Ex through the cartoonery of Pop to the geometric structure of minimalism—and, more specifically, an array of individuals, in particular Rothko, Rauschenberg, Polke, and Halley. Not only are the works historically inclusive but they also refer to Prince's own history, in that they contain an amalgam of images and techniques utilized in his past paintings. While these works are endlessly skillful, they also convey an underlying sense that painting has lost its efficacy; they are as much ghosts of painting as Prince's photographs were ghosts of photography. This quality is the source of the artist's strength. Through May 11. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Joan Wallace—Paintings by half of the now defunct Wallace & Donohue team. They are anti-formalist and anti-patriarchal, and each has a twist or two. A painting of a woman's profile made up of Frank Stella pinstripes is actually an adaptation of a Sherrie Levine collage. The painting is on horizontal panels, which slide open to reveal a blowup of a Robert Morris portrait of himself in S & M garb. This loaded juxtaposition of images deals with the struggle between form and content, the art system and its subversion, and the title—"Bob's Your Uncle"—is a naughty insider joke about patriarchy and authorship. Despite a certain cleverness, however, this piece, like the others in the show, is essentially a nonartist's art. Through May 11. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Clemens Weiss—Many of the artists who have exhibited at the Feldman gallery have offered views of what the brain might look like if its contents could be displayed. Weiss portrays the brain as something broken into a million pieces and glued back together—very ordered, but in a way that may be understood only by a scholar at home with clutter. There are two major pieces here, both of them very effective. One consists of hundreds of flat boxes made of glued broken glass, containing drawings and displayed on metal shelves (most of the drawings are not visible). The other work consists of a forest of shrines made of the same kind of glued broken glass. Through May 25. (31 Mercer St.)

H. C. Westermann (1922-81)—Drawings and prints by the father of American regionalist surreal funky figuration. Although this is not the best selection one could gather, don't worry: there's no such thing as a pedestrian Westermann. Through May 11. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

ART—Cont'd

THOMAS WOODRUFF—A show that includes nine oval paintings of a Gilles-like clown, which are executed in an Old Master style but are about as close to Keene's wide-eyed dime-store portraits as enlightened painting gets. Each work shows the clown in a different costume and with different makeup, and each has mournful tears somewhere in it—under the clown's eyes, in the air, pinned to his costume. Also on display here are two other groups of nine works, including some very saccharine paintings of baskets of beribboned puppies, other furry friends, and flowers. In this show the artist's obsessive, antiquated technique makes sense—in a not quite fathomable way. Through May 25. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"RECLAIMING THE SPIRIT"—A carefully considered exhibition of twentieth-century painting from south of the border. With the exception of two Diego Riveras—a Cubist landscape and a peasant grouping—all the works have a surrealistic edge. A continuum is quite convincingly traced from historic works by Wifredo Lam and Joaquín Torres-García to contemporary paintings. Many of the contemporary works—Ray Smith's penetrating mythical narratives, Guillermo Kuitca's image of a skull rising from the mist of a Scandinavian map, Julio Galán's marvellous collage of cut-up religious posters—translate the Magic Realism of Central and South American literature into striking visual terms. Through May 25. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)

"PICASSO'S 'PARADE' FROM PAPER TO STAGE"—"Parade" (1917) was a historic and controversial ballet with a score by Satie, a libretto by Cocteau, choreography by Massine, and costumes and sets by Picasso. This small but thorough exhibition includes virtually all of the artist's preparatory drawings, which reveal a more technical Picasso than that of his "art" drawings. The curtain for "Parade," on display in photographic form, was fifty-five feet long, constituting Picasso's largest painting. The costumes, principally the three Cubist constructions for the Managers (also represented in several photographs), are some of the artist's most inventive sculptures. Also on view is Satie's luscious handwritten score. Through June 13. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

GROUP SHOWS—At **GUIDARTE**, 379 West Broadway: An exhibition of drawings by nineteen women, including Louise Bourgeois, Jane Kaplowitz, Judy Pfaff, Kiki Smith, Joan Jonas, Joan Mitchell, Ellen Phelan, Elyn Zimmerman, Susan Rothenberg, and Elizabeth Murray. No theme has been declared here, and yet all of these works suggest certain shared characteristics: an offhand, whimsical, or humorous approach, and an idiom at once figurative and abstract. It's a surprisingly coherent and pleasant show. Through May 30. . . . **WEBER**, 142 Greene St.: Large-scale sculptures by gallery artists, including Buren, Haacke, Biederman, and LeWitt. The most resonant work, a Smithson corner piece consisting of a mirror and a mound of rock salt, is both a straightforward and a mystifying examination of presence and absence. Through May 25.

SHORT LIST—**ROBERT BEAUCHAMP**, M-13, at 72 Greene St. (through May 18); **PAUL BOWEN**, Shainman, 560 Broadway (through May 18); **STANLEY BOXER**, Dorsky, 578 Broadway (through May 11); **SAM GILLIAM**, Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St. (through May 25); **MARY HAMBLETON**, Auchincloss, 558 Broadway (through May 21); **EVA HESSE**, SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through May 22); **JAMES HYDE**, Good, 532 Broadway (through June 8); **PAUL JENKINS**, Gimpel, 415 West Broadway (through May 18); **SHERRIE LEVINE**, Boone, 417 West Broadway (through June 29); **ROBERT LOBE**, Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through June 8); **SAM MESSER**, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. (through May 25); **MATT MULLICAN**, Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through June 1); **LOWELL NESBITT**, Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway (through June 1); **DEBORAH OROPALLO**, Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through June 1); **MIMMO PALADINO**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through June 10); **ANNE AND PATRICK POIRIER**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through May 25); **JOSEPH STELLA** and **MILTON AVERY**, Snyder, 588 Broadway (through May 25); **ALAN TURNER** and **DIKE BLAIR**, Wingate, 578 Broadway (through May 25).

OTHER GALLERIES

"INTERROGATING IDENTITY"—Another politically correct exhibition with works of wildly varying interest. Unlike similar shows, this is not one in which the context is more interesting than the work. Featured are artists from the United States, Canada, and England who are members of minorities, principally blacks, Native Americans, and Arabs. Whitfield Lovell's large drawings of clothes with allegorical renderings atop them and Albert Chong's shamanistic tableaux of chairs decorated with shells, feathers, coconuts, and dreadlocks address the idea of portraiture in the broadest sense of the word. Racial dichotomies are expressed articulately by Ingrid Pollard, in a photo-and-text work that discusses the alienation of English blacks from the British countryside, and by Glenn Ligon, in a word painting that describes the dilemma of a black artist using a white vocabulary. A few of the works are so universal in their appeal that the issue of racial or ethnic identity drops away. Such is the case with Lani Maestro's paintings on fabric of an ear, a hand, a grid of eyes, and a screaming mouth, accompanied by a handwritten poem about a despotic general who likes to display the body parts of his victims. The paintings are chilling by themselves and do not need the text to convey their meaning. Through May 18. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl.)

"KULCHER QUEEN AND KULCHER BOOKS"—An exhibition of more than forty books and magazines that Lita Hornick published through the Kulcher Press, including "Screen Tests," by Gerard Malanga and Andy Warhol, and "Interlocking Lives," by Alex Katz and Kenneth Koch. Through June 28. (Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

RALPH GIBSON'S latest book, "L'Histoire de France," has a lot going for it—an introduction by Marguerite Duras, a lavish layout, high-quality reproductions—but, unfortunately, not the photographs themselves. We're all for an artist who wants to be original, and we think it's vital that publishers support experimental visions, but there is such a thing as trying too hard—Gibson's work is an example. Take, for instance, the photograph that is opposite the chapter title "Le Fleuve." One could interpret the image to be some kind of aerial, topographical view. And to some eyes it might look a bit like a detail of a Franz Kline painting, or maybe a blown-up section of one of Brice Marden's drawings. We suspect Gibson has something in mind besides a reference to the dynamic abstractions of Kline and Marden, but whatever it is doesn't come through. The collection of images in this book is a lesson about what can happen when conceptualism overwhelms photography. (Gibson's exhibition, "L'Histoire de France," starts May 11 at Castelli Graphics, 578 Broadway, near Prince St.)

JOAN FONTCUBERTA—Two shows, by an impressive Catalan artist, of photographs that have been somewhat mysteriously altered, yet somehow not poetically "violated." At Zabriskie (724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St., open Mondays; through May 22) there are photograms on, for instance, hand-painted cloths, wallpaper, and an "Andalusian Fan." Collectively titled "Paper Gardens," the works suggest costume archives and period rooms, and seem to have been issued by some genteel society for Proustian cryogenics. At Lieberman & Saul (155 Spring St.; through May 15) there are pictures more like traditional grotesques, the kind of thing the artist was first noted for. Fontcuberta's work is at once baroque, straightforward, and subtly beautiful.

"PHOTOPROJECTS"—New works in various formats by several young artists, including Richard Rothman, Anne Barnard, Maria Martinez-Cañas, and Dick Schlefer. Through May 19. (White Columns, 154 Christopher St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

SHORT LIST—**ALEXANDER ALLAND**, Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5; through Oct. 27); **BRUCE BARNBAUM** and **KAREN HALVERSON**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays; through May 25); **EILEEN COWIN**, Baum, 588 Broadway (through June 1); **EIKOH HOSOE**, International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; through May 26); **DAVID LEVINTHAL** and **EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through May 25); **EL LISSITZKY** and **EDWARD QUIGLEY**, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through June 1); **ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 18); **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through June 11); **CHRIS STEELE-PERKINS**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (through May 25); **BERNAR VENET**, Sikkema, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through May 18).

MUSIC

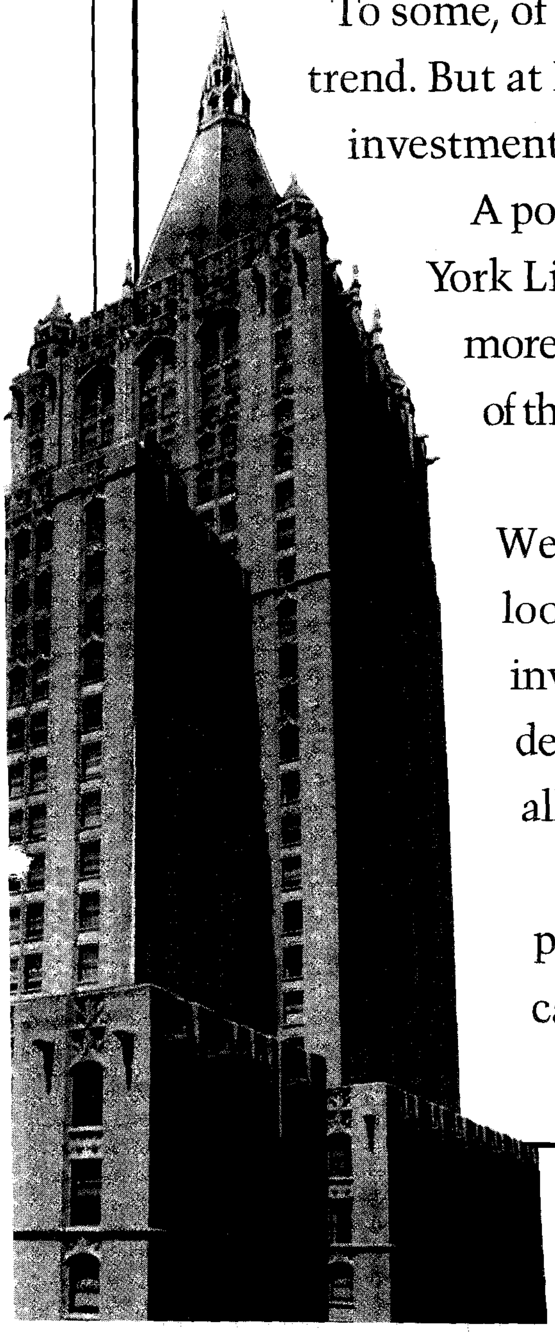
ROGER NORRINGTON'S career has been an astonishing one—the last decade of it, at any rate. Through the nineteen-sixties and seventies he was an admired, imaginative, offbeat choral and opera conductor well out of the international limelight. Then—as everyone knows who reads the *Billboard* charts or record-store Sunday advertisements—in 1987, he produced the first commercially and critically successful early-instrument recordings of symphonies by Beethoven. And then! Instant celebrity, and a steady stream of recordings—Berlioz, Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn, more Beethoven, Mozart, Rossini, Weber, even Wagner, all with the London Classical Players on old instruments. How can research and absorption keep pace with such rapid expansion of the "early music" terrain? Will all this production be found to stand up to the exciting Beethoven trailblazers?

While we've been pondering those questions, Mr. Norrington has whisked ahead to Brahms, a composer who nearly survived into our own century. Are we really to have "authentic" Brahms? With all the swooping and sliding on the strings? The Brahms recordings made with the London band are taped but not yet issued; a foretaste may come when Mr. Norrington leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's (a style-conscious modern-instrument band) in an all-Brahms bill on May 9, at Avery Fisher Hall.

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949.)

OPERA

BAM OPERA—Presenting the New York première of "Hydrogen Jukebox," with music by Philip Glass to poetry by Allen Ginsberg. Staged by Ann Carlson, designed by Jerome Sirlin, and conducted by Martin Goldray. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 7 at 7, May 8-11 at 8, and May 12 at 2.)



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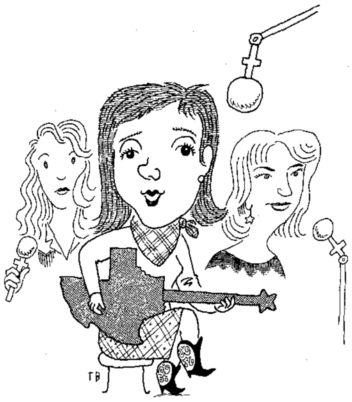


Marlboro Music Festival: Matraca Berg, Nanci Griffith, Mary-Chapin Carpenter . . .

Indiana University Opera Theatre—Presenting a fully staged production of Mozart's "La Finta Giardiniera," sung in English and conducted by Brian Balkwill. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 874-7515. May 8 at 8.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Stephen Rogers Radcliffe conducts concert versions of three American one-act operas: John Harbison's "Full Moon in March," Ned Rorem's "The Robbers," and Douglas Moore's "Gallantry: A Soap Opera." Soloists include baritone Richard Holmes and bass-baritone Robert Osborne. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 10 at 8.)

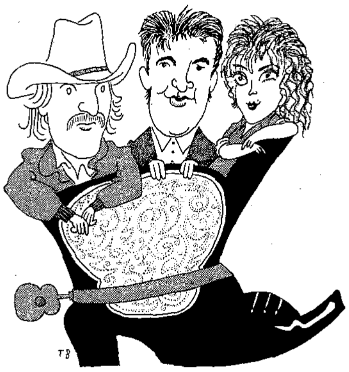
Measured Breaths Theatre Company—Presenting a staged realization by Robert Press of Monteverdi's "Madrigals of Love and War," sung in English and set in the present; with Roberto Pace conducting an eleven-member cast and a seven-piece early-instrument ensemble. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. May 10-13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 334-8402.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Music from SummerFest—Robert Kapilow conducts the Rutgers Festival Orchestra in symphonies and piano concertos by Johann Christian Bach and Mozart, who acknowledged a strong stylistic debt to "the English Bach." Featuring pianist Ilana Vered. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—May 9 at 8: Roger Norrington conducts music by Brahms: his "Tragic" Overture, his Second Symphony, and his rarely performed cantata "Rinaldo," featuring tenor Jerry Hadley and the New York Choral Artists. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ May 14 at 8: Olegna Fuschi is featured as soloist in piano concertos by Schumann, Weber, and David Diamond, as well as in Busoni's "Indian Fantasy." José Serebrier conducts. (Carnegie Hall.)

Manhattan Philharmonic—Three conductors share the podium for a concert that includes Vivaldi's Gloria in D, Mozart's "Coronation" Mass, and Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy" (the last featuring pianist David Buechner). (Carnegie Hall. May 12 at 8.) . . . **note:** Ticket-holders may also attend a pre-concert recital, at 7, in which seven-year-old Gregory Magarshak, from the U.S.S.R., will perform music by Haydn, Chopin, and Debussy, as well as the first movement of his own C-Minor Piano Concerto.



. . . Alan Jackson, Vince Gill, and Pam Tillis

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Muti conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 34, Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony, Hindemith's "Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber," and Mahler's "Five Songs to Texts of Friedrich Rückert," featuring mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 13 at 8.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Andrew Carnegie had his "Music Hall" built in large part to provide a worthy concert venue for the Oratorio Society, which until then had contented itself with performing in the showrooms of a piano manufacturer. In the hall's opening concert, the Society performed Berlioz's Te Deum. To celebrate its hundredth season of performances in Carnegie Hall, the Society (augmented by the Boys Choir of Harlem) reprises the Berlioz work, and also performs Poulenc's Gloria and the première of a cantata by Ivan Tcherepnin. Lyndon Woodside directs. With soprano Benita Valente and tenor David Britton. (Carnegie Hall. May 8 at 8.)

American Boychoir—James Litton directs the choir, augmented by the Albemarle Consort of Voices and the Levin Eighteenth-Century Ensemble, in settings by Handel and Vivaldi of the Psalm "Dixit Dominus." (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 226. May 8 at 8.)

Mozart Masses in Concert—Robert Porco directs the Mass in C-Minor, K. 427 ("The Great"), as well as a church sonata, a symphony, and the late motet "Ave Verum Corpus." Featuring various soloists and the Indiana University Singers, Chamber Choir, and Philharmonic Orchestra. (Alice Tully Hall. May 9 at 8.)

St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra—David Randolph directs Berlioz's Requiem, featuring tenor Grayson Hirst. (Carnegie Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Canterbury Choral Society—Charles Dodsley Walker directs the choir, soloists, and an orchestra in Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces" and Fauré's Requiem. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 12 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

Collegiate Chorale—Robert Bass directs the choir and an orchestra in Mozart's Requiem; with soloists Abbie Furmansky (soprano), Jane Gilbert (mezzo-soprano), Ken Tarver (tenor), and Howard Wilkinson (bass). (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 15 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

St. John's Chorale and Chamber Orchestra—Eric J. Milnes directs Handel's pastorale "Acis and Galatea"; with an early-instrument orchestra and soloists Bente Vist (soprano), Mark Bleeke and Michael Hume (tenors), and Nathaniel Watson (bass-baritone). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

Sophie Rolland and Marc-André Hamelin—The cellist and the pianist perform all of Beethoven's chamber works for their instruments, distributed between two concerts. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 6 and May 9 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Violinist Elmar Oliveira joins the ensemble for a concert that includes a Beethoven violin sonata and Schumann's "Märchenerzählungen," as well as works by Mozart and Hindemith. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 7:30.)

West End Chamber Players—The ensemble performs music by Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy, and Maurice Gardner (the première of his Bagatelles for Winds and Strings). (Weill Recital Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Benefit Concert—Soprano Roberta Peters, flutist Paula Robison, violinists Ani and Ida Kavafian, clarinettist Stanley Drucker, cellist Lynn Harrell, and pianists Richard Goode, Samuel Sanders, Warren Jones, and Charles Wadsworth perform in a benefit concert for the Camphill Foundation. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 580-5511.)

Chamber Music at the Y—A group of string players interpret Beethoven's rarely performed String Quintet in C, Op. 29; and pianist Seymour Lipkin joins the ensemble for chamber music by Schumann and Brahms. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 7-8 at 8.)

Emerson String Quartet—Performing two quartets by Mozart. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 8 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

League of Composers / ISCM—Presenting a wide-ranging program of works by Ben Johnston, Vladimir Ussachevsky, Olly Wilson, and other contemporary composers. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 8 at 7:30.)

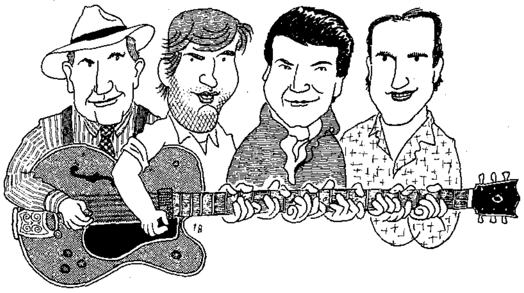
Peter Schickele—A vocal-and-instrumental chamber ensemble presents a diverse handful of the composer's works, including "Summer Serenade," for bassoon and piano, and the première of a Mass for men's voices. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 8 at 8.)

Bargemusic—An all-Schubert program, featuring violinist Ik-Hwan Bae, cellist Ronald Thomas, and pianist Stephanie Brown. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 9 at 7:30 and May 12 at 4.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Presenting chamber music by Rossini, Dvořák, and Hindemith. (Metropolitan Museum. May 9 at 8.)

Ruth Laredo and the Shanghai String Quartet—The pianist and the quartet perform two high points of the piano quintet repertoire, by Schumann (in E-Flat, Op. 44) and Brahms (in F Minor, Op. 34). (Metropolitan Museum. May 10 at 8.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—The quartet, augmented by guest flutist Patricia Spencer, presents chamber music by Johann Friedrich Fasch, Schumann (his infrequently played G-Minor Trio, Op. 110), Florent Schmitt, and Ronald Roseman (the première of his "Sonata a Quattro"). (Weill Recital Hall. May 10 at 8.)



. . . Chet Atkins, Leo Kottke, Steve Wariner, Larry Carlton, and . . .

Frederick Moyer—Pianist, performing sonatas by Haydn and Beethoven, études by Chopin, and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." (Metropolitan Museum. May 11 at 2:30.)

Alexis Weissenberg—The Bulgarian-born pianist performs Bach's Goldberg Variations. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 11 at 8.)

Artek Ensemble—The period-instrument group collaborates with the Talisman vocal ensemble in a program of French music from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth. (St. James Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Elisabeth Söderström—The Swedish soprano performs songs of her compatriots (including Ellen Heijkorn, Ture Rangström, and Wilhelm Stenhammar), as well as works by Robert and Clara Schumann, Brahms, Mahler, and others. With pianist Warren Jones. (Alice Tully Hall. May 12 at 3.)

Music and More—Bass Kevin Maynor and pianist Israela Margalit perform songs by Glinka, Mussorgsky, and Rachmaninoff, in a program that also includes Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio in A Minor. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 12 at 3.)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—Presenting a Shostakovich cello sonata, as well as piano quartets by Mozart and Fauré. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. May 12 at 3:30. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

New York Festival of Song—Pianist Steven Blier directs a program of songs by such contemporary American composers as David Leisner, Aaron Kernis, Stewart Wallace, and John Musto (who also appears as a pianist). (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. May 12 at 5. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Barbara Shirvis—In her New York recital début, the soprano performs songs by Mozart, Wolf, and Fauré, among others. (Weill Recital Hall. May 12 at 5:30.)

Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz leads the ensemble in a fully staged production of the medieval music drama "Daniel and the Lions." (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 13 at 7. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Donald Joyce—The organist performs a concert consisting mainly of works by Max Reger, in observance of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the composer's death. Noted for his dense, chromatic counterpoint, Reger was particularly drawn to the organ. He once said that "every piece of organ music which is not at bottom related to Bach is impossible"; and, today, he is often acknowledged to be the most imposing German organ composer since that great predecessor. To underscore the connection, Mr. Joyce performs a Bach concerto and several Reger works, including the monumental "Introduction, Variations, and Fugue on an Original Theme in F-Sharp Minor." (Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Ave. at 85th St. May 13 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Quintet of the Americas—Daniel Asia conducts his own "Pine Songs" (featuring soprano Marlene Rallis Rosen and pianist Cameron Grant), in a concert that also includes wind quintets by György Ligeti, Jean Françaix, David Chaitkin, and Marlos Nobre. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 13 at 8.)

New York Cornet & Sacbut Ensemble—Performing early Baroque *canzone* and sonatas by Giovanni Gabrieli, Frescobaldi, and others; with a guest appearance by Baroque violinist David Douglass. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 13 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York New Music Ensemble—Presenting Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Inside," one of seventeen "text pieces" from his collection "For Times to Come" (1968-70), in which the performers are asked to improvise according to purely verbal instructions. The concert also includes recent electro-acoustic pieces by James Primosch, Judith Shatin, and C. Bryan Rulon. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 13 at 8.)

Ory Shihor—The pianist presents works by Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, and Schumann (his "Symphonic Études"). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 14 at 2.)

Kyler Brown—The organist's program includes works by Franck, Gigout, Widor, and Messiaen, in addition to an improvisation. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. May 14 at 8.)

New Music Consort—Presenting music by contemporary Japanese composers, including Makoto Shinohara and Toru Takemitsu. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 14 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Yanni—"Maybe a regular person would just throw up, but I play his music all the time," the television actress Linda Evans told *People*, on the occasion of her joint appearance with her amour, the New-Age god Yanni Chryssomallis, on the cover of the magazine not long ago. It's fair warning. The Greek pianist's compositions are an unholy marriage of Vangelis and Mantovani, and his *Playgirl*-centerfold good looks, soaring arrangements, and tinkling playing combine into a kitschy whole that has all the uplift of a see-through elevator in a hotel-lobby atrium. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 11 at 8.)

Liza Minnelli—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 8-11 at 8 and May 12 at 3.

"Highlights in Jazz"—Presenting the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band and the New York Society for the Preservation of Illegitimate Music. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. May 9 at 8.)

The Flirtations—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 10-11 at 11.

Chuck Berry—Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 960-8833. May 11 at 8.

"American Folk"—The final program in the four-concert series features the McIntosh County Shouters and the Heavenly Tones. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 11 at 9.)

Pat Benatar—Beacon Theatre. May 14 at 8.

The Feelies—With the Chickasaw Mudd Puppies. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 15 at 8.)

Ed Blackwell—Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. May 15 at 8.

Bang on a Can Festival—Opening performances of a monthlong music happening that will run through June 4. May 9 at 8: Works by Louis Andriessen, Arvo Pärt, and Michael Nyman, performed by the Bang on a Can Orchestra (conducted by Reinbert de Leeuw), Icebreaker, and Greg Fulkerson. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: Arnold Dreyblatt and the Orchestra of Excited Strings, and the Cassatt Quartet (in a première by Glenn Branca). (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.) . . . ¶ May 12 from 2 P.M. to about 1 A.M.: A marathon concert, with the Kazue Sawai Koto Ensemble, Mieczyslaw Litwinski, Relâche, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, and many others. (La Mama Annex.)

Marlboro Music Festival Concerts—May 9 at 8: Nanci Griffith, Mary-Chapin Carpenter, and Matraca Berg. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: Chet Atkins, with Larry Carlton, Leo Kottke, and Steve Wariner. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ May 15 at 8: Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, and Pam Tillis. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070.)

Roulette—May 9: Mikel Rouse and Mark Lampariello. . . . ¶ May 10-11: Brenda Hutchinson. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Evenings at 9.)

Blues Concerts—May 10 at 8: David (Honeyboy) Edwards and Curtis Crawford. . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: Robert (Junior) Lockwood and John Campbell. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St. 1-718 858-2424.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, May 7-8 at 7:40.

Yankees—Vs. the Oakland A's, May 10 at 7:30, May 11-12 at 1:30, and May 13 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the California Angels, May 14-16 at 7:30.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Starts May 8. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Film Festival—On May 11, from 10 A.M. to 11 P.M., New York University is presenting films and videos that relate to American subcultures. Highlights include the cult film "Paris Is Burning," at noon; Ellen Spiro's "DiAna's Hair Ego," at 3; three works by George Stoney, starting at 7; and "Coney Island," by Ric Burns, at 9:45. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. For more information, call 529-1955.)

Talks—May 9 at 6:30: Betty Allen, David Henry Hwang, Mikki Shepard, and A. B. Spellman talk about America's cultural "mosaic." (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. For information about tickets, call 870-1671.) . . . ¶ May 14 at 6: Betty Friedan talks about children. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 741-5690.)

Readings—May 10 at 8: Nicholas Christopher reads from his own poetry. (Ceres Gallery, 91 Franklin St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: Bobbie Ann Mason and Jane Smiley read from their own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ May 14 at 7:30: Richard Wilbur reads from his own poetry. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. 431-9232.) . . . ¶ May 15 at 6: Gish Jen reads from her novel "Typical American." (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.) . . . ¶ May 16 at 7: Michael Collier, Edward Hirsch, Maxine Kumin, William Maxwell, James Merrill, and others read poetry by William Meredith. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400.)

Memorandum—Don't forget your mother on May 12.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 23.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Poison" (directed by Todd Haynes).
Theatre 2: "The Comfort of Strangers" (†).
Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 9: "Requiem for Dominic" (Robert Dornhelm). From May 10: "The Ballad of the Sad Café" (Simon Callow), with Vanessa Redgrave, Keith Carradine, Rod Steiger, and Cork Hubbert.
Theatre 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 6: Through May 9: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu. From May 10: The Human Rights Watch Film Festival, a seven-day event, with thirty-six films and several discussions. Call 518-3000 for ticket and schedule information.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Films by Yoko Ono. (Closed Mondays.)

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.
Theatre 2: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 3: "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Eating" (Henry Jaglom).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Killer" (James Woo, in Mandarin).
Theatre 3: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 9: "Rich Girl" (Joel Bender), with Jill Schoelen and Don Michael Paul. From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 5: "One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 6: "Forever Mary" (Marco Risi, in Italian).
Theatre 7: "The British Animation Invasion," twenty-five short films.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.
Theatre 3: Through May 9: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From May 10: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.
Theatre 4: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.
Theatre 6: "Alice" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Oscar" (John Landis).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 2: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 9: "Rich Girl" (Joel Bender), with Jill Schoelen and Don Michael Paul. From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 4: "The Object of Beauty" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.
Theatre 2: Through May 9: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly. From May 10: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.
Theatre 3: "Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton.
Theatre 2: Through May 9: "The Grifters" (Stephen Frears), with Anjelica Huston, John Cusack, and Annette Bening. From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.

Ellen Barkin in "Switch"

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 9: "New Jack City" (†). From May 10: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.
Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "Oscar" (John Landis), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 3: "Through May 7: "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976, John Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara. May 8-12: "Faces" (†). From May 13: "Shadows" (1961, Cassavetes).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.
Theatre 2: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Impromptu" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 9: "Rich Girl" (Joel Bender), with Jill Schoelen and Don Michael Paul. From May 10: "Sweet Talker" (Michael Jenkins), with Bryan Brown and Karen Allen.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through May 9: "Cross My Heart" (Jacques Fansten, in French).
From May 10: "Strangers in Good Company" (Cynthia Scott).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through May 9: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
From May 10: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.
Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through May 9: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 2: "Oscar" (John Landis), with Sylvester Stallone.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through May 7: "Chameleon Street" (1989, directed by Wendell B. Harris, Jr.). From May 8: "Herdsmen of the Sun" (1988, Werner Herzog) and "Black Water" *(Allen Moore).*
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Bleecker Movie House, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)
"The Vanishing" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest *Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.*

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Impromptu" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.

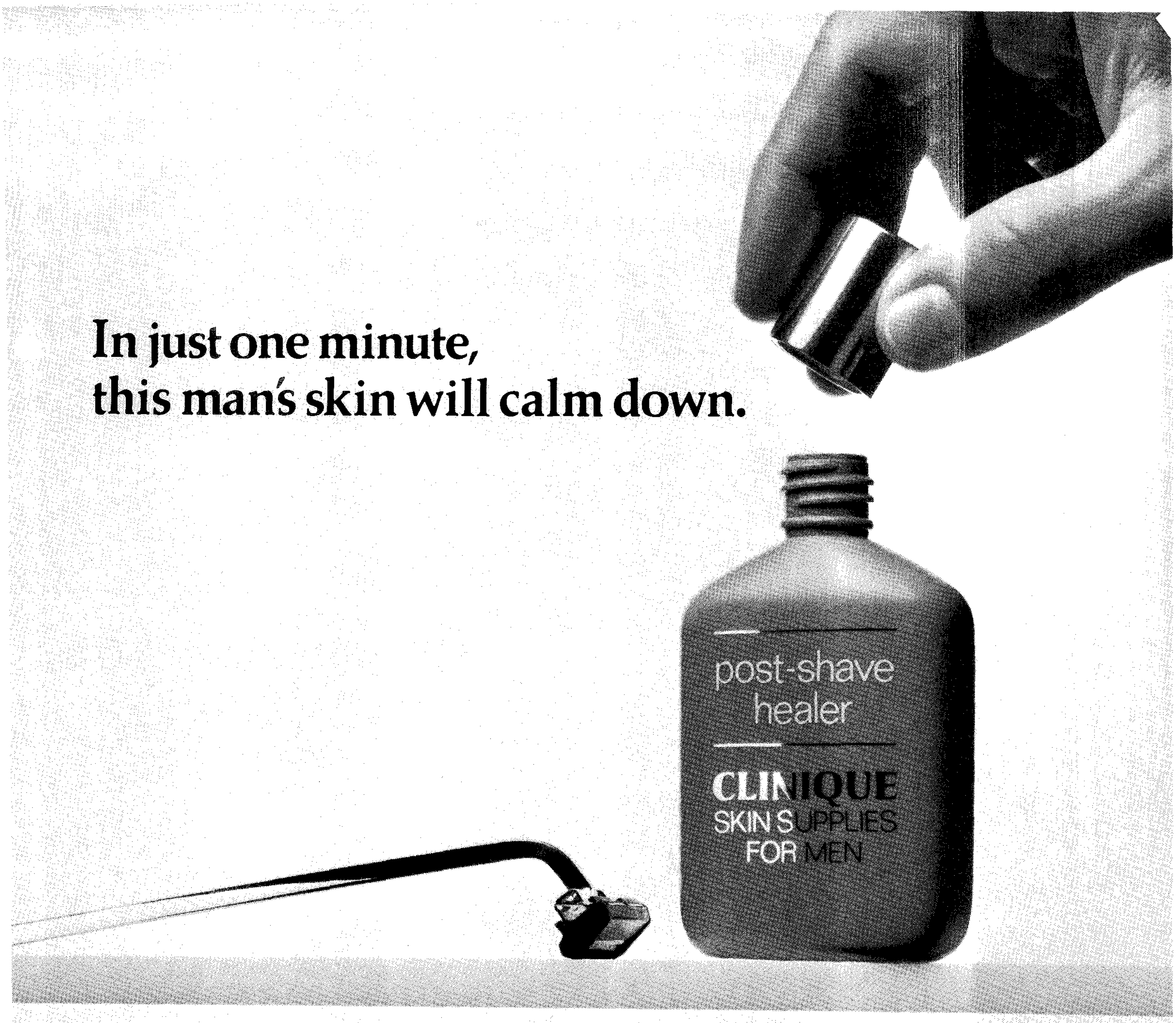
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Oscar" (John Landis), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 2: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (James Ivory), with Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward.
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 9: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly. From May 10: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
Theatre 3: Through May 9: "China Cry" (James F. Collier). From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 4: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 5: "Class Action" (†).
Theatre 6: "A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.
Theatre 7: "Impromptu" (†).
Theatre 8: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 9: "The Object of Beauty" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Five Heartbeats" (†).
Theatre 2: "New Jack City" (†).
Theatre 3: "One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Oscar" (John Landis), with Sylvester Stallone.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Mister Johnson" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Doors" (†).
Theatre 4: "Class Action" (†).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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Theatre 6: "Impromptu" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Spartacus" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Journey of Hope" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "La Femme Nikita" (†).

Theatre 2: "Alice" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier, in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Class Action" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Defending Your Life" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven, in German), with Lena Stolze.

Theatre 2: Through May 9: "Korczak" (Andrzej Wajda, in Polish). From May 10: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French).

Theatre 3: "Ju Dou" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"The Object of Desire" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: Through May 9: "One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton. From May 10: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.

Theatre 2: "Toy Soldiers" (Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.

Theatre 3: Through May 9: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.

Theatre 4: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 5: "Oscar" (John Landis).

Theatre 6: Through May 9: "Rich Girl" (Joel Bender), with Jill Schoelen and Don *Michael Paul. From May 10: "FX2—The* Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.

Theatre 2: "Impromptu" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.

Theatre 2: "A Rage in Harlem."

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Toy Soldiers" (directed by Daniel Petrie, Jr.), with Sean Astin and Wil Wheaton.

Theatre 2: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 3: "Rich Girl" (Joel Bender), with Jill Schoelen and Don Michael Paul.

Theatre 4: "The Five Heartbeats" (†).

Theatre 5: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze" (Michael Pressman); and "Kill Line."

Theatre 6: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"One Good Cop" (Heywood Gould), with Michael Keaton.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 9: "The Perfect Weapon" (Mark DiSalle), with Jeffrey Speakman. From May 10: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, and Robin Givens.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.

Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (James Dearden), with Matt Dillon and Sean Young.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "New Jack City" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 9: "New Jack City" (†). From May 10: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, *225 W. 57th. (582-4582)*

Through May 11: "Citizen Kane" (1941, directed by Orson Welles), with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, and Everett Sloane.

May *12-13:* "The Magnificent Ambersons" (†); and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.

May 14-15: "Portrait of Jennie" (1949, William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, Ethel Barrymore, Lillian Gish, and David Wayne; and "The Enchanted Cottage" (†).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

Through May 7: "Reversal of Fortune" (†); and "Strangers on a Train" (1951, Alfred Hitchcock), with Farley Granger, Robert Walker, and Ruth Roman.

May 8-11: "Dead Ringers" (1988, David Cronenberg), with Jeremy Irons and Geneviève Bujold; and "Don't Look Now" (1973, Nicolas Roeg), with Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie.

May 12-14: "Death in Venice" (1971, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde and Bjorn Andresen; and "The Belly of an Architect" (1987, Peter Greenaway).

From May 15: "Life and Nothing But" (1990, Bertrand Tavernier; in French); and "The Sacrifice" (1986, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish), with Erland Josephson.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through May 9: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles), with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, and Everett Sloane.

May 10-13: "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Erich von Stroheim; and "Ace in the Hole" (†).

May 14-15: "The Major and the Minor" (†); *and "Five Graves to Cairo"* (1943, Billy Wilder), with Franchot Tone, Akim Tamiroff, Anne Baxter, Erich von Stroheim, and Peter Van Eyck.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

May 6: "Rififi" (1955, Jules Dassin; in French), with Jean Servais, Robert Manuel, Carl Mohner, and Dassin; and "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960, François Truffaut; in French), with Charles Aznavour.

May 7: "Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion" (1970, Elio Petri; in Italian), with Gian Maria Volonte; and "Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man" (1981, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Ugo Tognazzi and Anouk Aimée.

May 8: "Dragonwyck" (1946, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Gene Tierney, Vincent Price, Walter Huston, and Glenn Langan; and "My Cousin Rachel" (1952, Henry Koster), with Olivia de Havilland and Richard Burton.

May 9: "The Fearless Vampire Killers" (1967, Roman Polanski), with Jack MacGowran and Sharon Tate; and "Love at First Bite" (†).

May 10-11: "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joel McCrea, Laraine Day, and George Sanders; and "Saboteur" (1942, Hitchcock), with Priscilla Lane, Robert Cummings, and Otto Kruger.

May 12: "Marriage—Italian Style" (1964, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni; and "Seduced and Abandoned" (†).

May 13: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya; and "The Blue Angel" (1929, Josef von Sternberg; in German), with Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings, and Hans Albers.

May 14: "Written on the Wind" (1957, Douglas Sirk), with Rock Hudson, Lauren Bacall, Robert Stack, and Dorothy Malone; and "The Tarnished Angels" (1958, Sirk), with Hudson, Stack, and Malone.

May 15: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale; and "Twentieth Century" (1934, Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Ralph Forbes.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—May 6 at 2: "The Asthenic Syndrome" (1989, directed by Kira Muratova; in Russian). . . . ¶ May 6 at 6: Three films by Peter Thompson, who will be present. . . . ¶ May 7 at 3 and 6: "Creative Process: Norman McLaren" (1990, Donald McWilliams), a documentary. Mr. McWilliams will be present. . . . ¶ May 9 at 3 and 6: "Children of the Left: A Story About Family and Politics in Cold War America" (1989, Eric Strange), a documentary; and "Unknown Secrets: Art and the Rosenberg Era" (1990, Daniel Keller, Charles Light, and Rob Okun), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 10 at 3: "Mother" (1988, Teguh Karya; in Bahasa Indonesia). . . . ¶ May 11 at 1:30: "The Asthenic Syndrome." . . . ¶ May 11 at 5: "Sink or Swim" (1990) and "Damned if You Don't" (1987), both by Su Friedrich. . . . ¶ May 12 at 2:30: "Thursday's Children" (1953, Guy Brenton and Lindsay Anderson), a documentary; and "The Music Child" (1976, David Parry). . . . ¶ May 12 at 5: "Conversations with Willard Van Dyke" (1981, Amalie Rothschild), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 13 at 3: "226-1960" (1984, Richard Rogers), a documentary; and "Correction *Please, or How We Got Into Pictures" (1979,* Noel Burch), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 13 at 6: "The Lighted Field" (1987, Andrew Noren). . . . ¶ May 14 at 3: "Mario Botta" (1988, Andreas Pfaffli) and "Louis Kahn" (1974, Paul Falkenberg and Hans Namuth). . . . ¶ May 14 at 6: "Siren of the Tropics" (1927, Henri Etievant and Mario Nalpas; in French, with no English subtitles), with Josephine Baker; and "The Master of the House" (1925, Carl Dreyer; in Danish).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"The Art of Reality: Innovators of the Documentary." May 11 at 2: "Don't Look Back" (1967, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . ¶ May 11 at 4: "High School" (1968, Frederick Wiseman). . . . ¶ May 12 at 2: "The Pursuit of Happiness" (1983, Julie Gustafson and John Reilly). . . . ¶ May 12 at 3:30: "Doing Time: Life Inside the Big House" (1990, Alan and Susan Raymond).

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (477-2714)—May 8 at 7: "Arsenal" (1929, Alexandr Dovzhenko; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 8 at 9, May 9 at 10:30, and May 10-11 at 10: "Antigone" (1989, Amy Greenfield). . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "The Opium and the Baton" (1970, Ahmed Rachedi; in Algerian). . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: "Wind from the South" (1975, Mohammed Slim Riad; in Algerian). . . . ¶ May 10-11 at 8: A program of short films. . . . ¶ May 11 at 4:30 and May 12 at 5 and 9:30: "Air Trio" (1985) and "Where the Coast Meets the Sea, Chapter One: The Ocean" (1990), both by Andrej Zdravic. . . . ¶ May 11 at 6: "Earth" (1930, Dovzhenko). . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Wedding of Moussa" (1982, Tayeb Mefti; in Algerian). . . . ¶ May 12 at 7: "The Mill" (1985, Ahmed Rachedi; in Algerian). . . . ¶ May 15 at 6: "Aerograd" (1935, Dovzhenko). . . . ¶ May 15 at 8: "Goddess Remembered" (1990) and "The Burning Times" (1990), both by Donna Read.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—May 10 at 6:30: "The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On" (1987, Kazuo Hara; in Japanese).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—May 7 at 6:15 and May 8 at 2: "The Deadman" (1989, Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn) and "Because We Must" (1989, Charles Atlas). . . . ¶ May 9-10 at 2: "Cycles" (1989, Zeinabu Irene Davis) and "Tongues Untied" (1989, Marlon Riggs). . . . ¶ May 11-12 at 2: "Friendly Witness" (1989, Warren Sonbert), "Site/Recite" (1989, Gary Hill), "Volcano Saga" (1989, Joan Jones), and "From Here and There Too: Moscow Postcards 1989" (1990, Hans Breder). . . . ¶ May 14 at 6:15 and May 15 at 2: "New York Portrait: Part III" (1990, Peter Hutton), "Siskyavi: The Place of Chasms" (1989, Victor Masayesva), and "Fade to Black" (1990, Tony Cokes and Don Trammel).

Museum of Television and Radio, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." May 7-11: "Captain Kangaroo at Carnegie Hall" (1962, CBS), with Bob Keeshan; and "What Does Orchestration Mean?" (1958, CBS), a Young People's Concert series, with Leonard Bernstein. . . . From May 14: "NBC Symphony Orchestra with Arturo Toscanini" (1952) and "NBC Symphony Orchestra with Arturo Toscanini" (1951). Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." May 7-11: Episodes 36-40 of "Monty Python's Flying Circus," with Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin. . . . From May 14: Episodes 41-45 of "Monty Python's Flying Circus." Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 8 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "A Game for Six Lovers" (1960, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze; in French), with Bernadette Lafont, Michel Galabru, and Françoise Brion. . . . ¶ May 15 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "May Fools" (1990, Louis Malle; in French), with Michel Piccoli, Miou-Miou, Dominique Blanc, and Michel Duchaussoy.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—May 7 at noon: "Jack Johnson" (1973, Jim Jacobs). . . . ¶ May 7 at 2:30: "My Friend Flicka" (1943, Harold Schuster), with Roddy McDowall, Preston Foster, and Rita Johnson. . . . ¶ May 9 at noon: "Castles of Clay" (1978, Alan and Joan Root). . . . ¶ May 9 at 6: "Making 'Do the Right Thing' " (1989), directed by St. Clair Bourne, who will be present. . . . ¶ May 14 at noon: "Broken Noses" (1987, Bruce Weber). . . . ¶ May 14 at 2:30: "Misty" (1961, James B. Clarke), with David Ladd, Pam Smith, and Arthur O'Connell.

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—"Projected Radiance: The Cinema of Indonesia." May 8 at 6 and May 12 at 2: "Roro Mendut" (1982, Ami Priyono). . . . ¶ May 9 at 6 and May 12 at 5: "Mementoes" (1985, Teguh Karya). . . . ¶ May 10 at 6 and 8: "Sangkuriang" (1982, Gautama Sisworo Putra). . . . ¶ May 11 at 2: "The King of Madangkara" (1987, Imam Tantowi). . . . ¶ May 11 at 5: "Woman of Courage" (1989, Eros Djarot).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—"William Greaves: Chronicler of the African-American Experience." May 11 at 7:30: "Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice" (1989). . . . ¶ May 12 at 2: "From These Roots" (1974) and "Souls of Sin" (1948, Powell Lindsay).

92nd St. Y, Lexington at 92nd. (996-1100)—May 12 at 7:30: "Dreamers" (1988, Uri Barbash).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

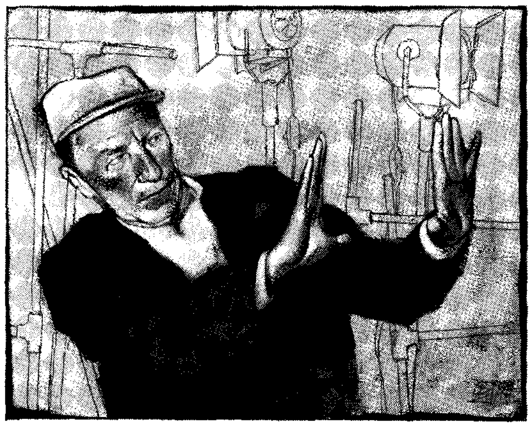
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Ace in the Hole (1951)—Billy Wilder produced and directed this box-office failure right after "Sunset Boulevard" and just before "Stalag 17." Some people have tried to claim some sort of satirical brilliance for it, but it's really just nasty, in a sociologically pushy way. Kirk Douglas is the big-time New York reporter who is so opportunistic that when he gets to where a collapsed roof has buried a man in New Mexico, he arranges to have the rescue delayed so that he can pump the story up. The trapped man dies, while Douglas keeps shouting in order that we can all see what a symptomatic, cynical exploiter he is. With Jan Sterling as the trapped man's wife, Porter Hall, Richard Benedict, Ray Teal, and Frank Cady. Script by Wilder, Lesser Samuels, and Walter Newman. Filmed on location near Gallup, New Mexico.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 10-13.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Class Action—In this high-concept legal thriller, directed by Michael Apted, Gene Hackman plays a flamboyant lawyer who specializes in civil-liberties and consumer-advocacy cases, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio plays his daughter, an ambitious associate in a slick corporate-law firm. The script—by Carolyn Shelby, Christopher Ames, and Samantha Shad—contrives to pit the father and the daughter against each other in a negligence suit against an auto manufacturer. Sparks, both personal and professional, are meant to fly, but the Hollywood engineers who designed this piece of product have cut a few too many corners: the thriller plotting is predictable, the family drama is broad and sentimental, and the connections between them are facile. Yet Hackman and Mastrantonio somehow manage to impart lifelike rhythms to their scenes together: their skill keeps this rickety contraption from stalling completely.—T.R. (Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3.)

The Comfort of Strangers—Harold Pinter's screenplay, adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan, is a kinky contemporary variation on the sort of plot that made Victorian readers shiver—the story of innocents lured into the clutches of charming villains. The innocents here are an unmarried English couple (Natasha Richardson and Rupert Everett) vacationing in Venice; the evil seducers are a husband and wife (Christopher Walken and Helen Mirren) whose tastes run to voyeurism and sadomasochism; the dread lair in which the monsters toy with their prey is a huge, ornately furnished apartment with a spectacular view of the city. The director, Paul Schrader, dresses his characters in Armani and sets the camera in motion to swirl gracefully around them, picking up miragelike shimmers from the canals and beautiful but ominous architectural details; the languorous camera movements create an authentically gothic sense of catastrophe just around the corner. Walken glides effortlessly through his role as the embodiment of Old World evil. He gives the character a lordly, sinister air, and suggests, as well, that he's wearing something really odd underneath his superbly tailored white suits. And Richardson is characteristically amazing: she brings a touch of humanity to this rather formal party. The movie improves on the novel by jettisoning its dubious psychology and its pretensions to literary significance. Schrader treats the story as an elegant horror-movie game, a trick done with mirrors, and he carries it off. Dante Spinotti's cinematography and Gianni Quaranta's production design contribute to the luxurious, decadent atmosphere. Music by Angelo Badalamenti.—T.R. (4/8/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

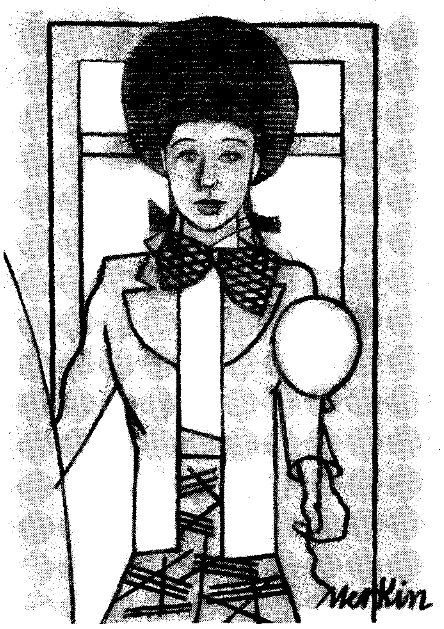


Douglas Sirk, director of a double bill at Theatre 80 St. Marks

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Movieland 8th St. Playhouse, Loews 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Loews Tower East; through May 9.)

Defending Your Life—The setting of Albert Brooks' disappointing new comedy is a place called Judgment City, which, according to this picture, is where people from Southern California go after death. Here recently completed lives are examined and evaluated, in a formal proceeding something like a trial: if the defendant wins the case, he moves up the cosmic ladder to a higher form of consciousness. The hero, Daniel Miller (Brooks), a yuppie adman who met his untimely end in a brand-new BMW, naturally believes in upward mobility; in death, as in life, he wants to impress the higher-ups and get that promotion. Although this sounds like an ideal setup for Brooks' kind of comedy, the film is mild-mannered and blandly whimsical, and its rhythms are sluggish. The humor doesn't have any satiric edge, because the character Brooks has written for himself isn't the egotistical, grotesquely needy baby boomer he played in his three previous movies. Brooks is celebrating qualities he used to satirize, and there's something smarmy about his attempt to turn himself into a lovable schlemiel—to cast a warmer, more flattering light on the self that his other pictures mercilessly exposed. Also with Meryl Streep, Lee Grant, and, as the hero's lawyer, Rip Torn, who periodically energizes the movie with some lunatic courtroom theatricality.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews Paramount.)

The Doors—Oliver Stone's film abut the sixties rock group focusses on Jim Morrison, its lead singer and main songwriter, who died in 1971, at the age of twenty-seven. Morrison (played by Val Kilmer) presented himself as a combination of shaman and *poète maudit,* and he was a star in life and a legend in death because he made the physical, intellectual, and spiritual excesses of the counterculture sexy. The movie is pure exploitation—an extended, self-important freakout. Stone reduces the richly contradictory experience of that period to the myth of Morrison, and, in the process, reduces Morrison and the Doors as well: the movie restricts the viewer's freedom to imagine the sixties culture as anything but a movement with a single voice, or to imagine the Doors as anything but a metaphor. (Kilmer is physically convincing as Morrison, but his performance can be only an impersonation: what the script—by Stone and J. Randal Johnson—gives him to play is the icon, not the man.) For a while, the obviousness and flat-out vulgarity are sort of entertaining, and it might be possible to enjoy the movie as a camp classic if you could ignore the mean-spiritedness that keeps breaking through—the fundamental hostility Stone seems to feel toward his subjects. He wants to turn the audience (and himself) on, but the movie's bad faith and tabloidlike sensibility leave us exhausted and depressed; we feel like voyeurs of our own memories. Also with Meg Ryan, Kathleen Quinlan, and Michael Wincott; the other Doors are played by Kyle MacLachlan, Frank Whaley, and Kevin Dillon.—T.R. (3/11/91) (Worldwide Cinemas.)



Ginger Rogers in "The Major and the Minor"

The Enchanted Cottage (1945)—A fantasy about a horribly scarred war veteran (Robert Young), hiding from the world, and a plainer-than-plain spinster (Dorothy McGuire), who are transformed by love and look miraculously beautiful to each other in their New England cottage. The DeWitt Bodeen and Herman J. Mankiewicz updating of the Pinero play was given the full solemnly sensitive treatment by the director, John Cromwell, which only seems to add to the painful ickiness of the material. The pathos and sloshy uplift can make one squirm with embarrassment mixed with anger. With Herbert Marshall as a blind composer who tries to explain the inexplicable, and Mildred Natwick, Spring Byington, and Hillary Brooke. (A 1924 silent version starred Richard Barthelmess.)—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; May 14-15.)

Faces (1968)—John Cassavetes' semi-documentary method is peculiar in that its triumphs and its failures are not merely inseparable from the method but often truly hard to separate from each other. The acting that is so bad it's embarrassing sometimes seems also to have revealed something, so we're forced to reconsider our notions of good and bad acting. But working out of themselves (as they do), his actors can't create characters. Their performances don't have enough range, so we tend to tire of them before the movie is finished. Still, a lot of people find this psychodrama agonizingly true and beautiful. It's about the meaninglessness of life for the well-heeled middle-aged; the deliberately raw material is about affluence and apathy, the importance of sex, and the miseries of marriage. With John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel.—P.K. (Cinema 3rd Avenue; May 8-12.)

La Femme Nikita—The end of French cinema as we know it. Written and directed by Luc Besson. With Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and (in a cameo) Jeanne Moreau. In French.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Five Heartbeats—There isn't a good scene per Heartbeat in this rags-to-sequins story of a Temptations-like five-man singing group. The sweet temper and eager-to-please showmanship of director-star Robert Townsend (who co-wrote the script with Keenen Ivory Wayans) can't compensate for his amateur filmmaking. The early sequences of the quintet's formation have some vaudevillian humor and unzipped energy, but then Townsend crams too much in: racism, "crossover" pressures, drugs, criminality, sexual and professional competition, and, yes, religious redemption. None of the Heartbeats (Townsend, Michael Wright, Leon, Harry J. Lennix, Tico Wells, and, later, John Canada Terrell) score the way Lonette McKee did in the girl-group movie "Sparkle." The only singer who does—Tressa Thomas, who plays Townsend's baby sister—performs once and is never heard from again. She tears through a number called "We Haven't Finished Yet." Townsend should have taken that cue: his movie is painfully unfinished.—M.S. (23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

Impromptu—James Lapine's film is an ebullient and absurdly entertaining account of the famous love affair of George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. The script, by Sarah Kernochan, makes Sand's wooing and winning of frail, chaste young Chopin into a busy exercise in farce, with a full complement of deception and setbacks and misunderstandings. Celebrities of the Romantic movement—Delacroix, Musset, and Liszt among them—are put through their paces, along with George and Frédéric, in the salons and ballrooms and country houses of eighteen-thirties France; they issue florid declarations of love, hurl barbed epigrams at their rivals, challenge each other to duels, and, over all, make complete asses of themselves in their pursuit of the sublime. They're lively company. The historical figures in this movie are cartoons, but they're cartoons with recognizable human qualities, and the actors look as if they were having a wonderful time charging around in their period costumes. Hugh Grant's Chopin is a brilliant caricature of the Romantic ideal of the artist; he gives the character an air of befuddled unworldliness, and punctuates his readings with delicately timed tubercular coughs. Judy Davis plays Sand—a great actress in a great role. Davis makes Sand's passionate absurdities both funny and tremendously moving; this woman's willingness to embarrass herself seems a kind of romantic heroism. Also with Bernadette Peters, Julian Sands (as Liszt), Mandy Patinkin (as Musset), Emma Thompson, Ralph Brown (as Delacroix), George Corraface, Anton Rodgers, and Anna Masset. The costumes, by Jenny Beavan, are spectacular.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

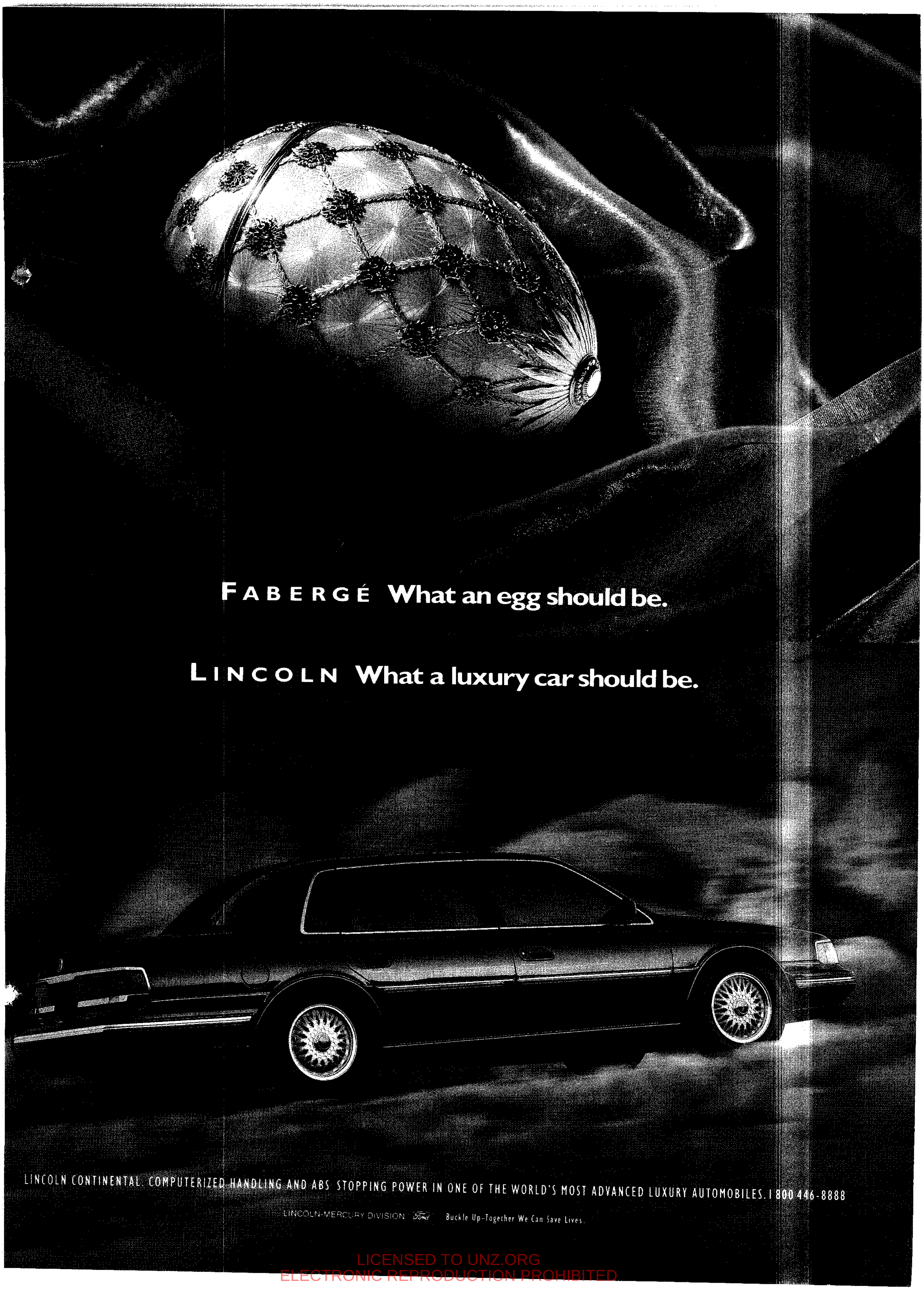
Journey of Hope—It's actually a journey into fear: a struggling Turkish farmer takes his wife and young son on a perilous trek to Switzerland, hoping to find "paradise behind the mountains." Black-market operators strip them of their possessions and dignity. The action in this icy muckraker culminates when the family and other Turks cross the Alps at night—without a guide—in a snowstorm. Inspired by a 1988 newspaper article, Xavier Koller's movie is just as topical now—it recalls the Kurdish catastrophe, even though these Turks are economic (not political) refugees, fleeing by the dozens (not the hundreds of thousands). But Koller doesn't give the audience a guide, either; he fails to lay out the issues coherently and dramatically. Intentionally or not, he makes his hero (the dour patriarch) seem foolish for abandoning a harsh but organic rural life. For better or worse—mostly worse—"Journey of Hope" duplicates the Latin-American refugee saga "El Norte": the eerie, harrowing border crossings are the only scenes as powerful as they should be. The rest amount to a lament for the dysfunctional Family of Man. (In Turkish, Italian, and Swiss German, with English and French subtitles.)—M.S. (57th St. Playhouse.)

Ju Dou—It's been compared to James M. Cain, but the postman barely rings once in this tale of adultery Chinese style. In a small mountain village in the twenties, an impotent dye-mill owner (Li Wei), crazed over his lack of an heir, tortures his beautiful young bride (Gong Li). She seeks comfort in the arms of his worker nephew (Li Bao-Tian). There's no compelling plot, only the grinding inevitability of fate and tradition. The director, Zhang Yimou, simply metes out punishment to the lovers, the tyrant—and the audience. The lovers' son does most of the damage. He has the lethal power of the Children of the Damned—unfortunately, without the gimmicky zest of their eerie, glowing eyeballs. Zhang started out as a painter and still photographer. He remains one, devoting more attention to the dye mill's set design than to the story or the characters. The bolts of fabric are colored in subtle, vivid hues; the people are made out of whole cloth. In Mandarin.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Love at First Bite (1979)—A rowdy burlesque of the Dracula movies, set in Manhattan, with dilapidated stuffed bats and a large assortment of gags; some of them are funny in a low-grade, moldy way, and some are even stupidly racist, but many are weirdly hip, with a true flaky wit. The scriptwriter, Robert Kaufman, will never be called a man of fine discrimination: he takes equal—almost obscene—relish in them all. Yet it's this relish—which the director, Stan Dragoti, seems to share—that fuels the movie, and, except for a wearying chase sequence toward the end, it bumps along entertainingly. As Count Dracula, George Hamilton uses the self-parody he first demonstrated in "Once Is Not Enough"; his Dracula is a swooningly romantic, ingenuously prurient gigolo with an indeterminate Transylvanian accent—his declaration of love sounds like "I lob you." His lady is a famous model, played by Susan Saint James; she isn't well photographed, but she has such great inflections that she hits her lines for every nuance of whacked-out comedy that's in them. And, in the Van Helsing role, Richard Benjamin has some good silly moments as the model's whiny-voiced psychiatrist.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 9.)

The Magnificent Ambersons (1942)—Orson Welles' second film has greater depth than "Citizen Kane," though it doesn't have the driving force that might have held it together. Working from the Booth Tarkington novel, Welles achieved some great sequences of family life—intense, harrowing squabbles. Tim Holt plays the arrogant, mother-fixated son who falls from the American aristocracy to the working class; Dolores Costello, the fragile blond beauty of the silent era, is his soft, yielding mother; and, as the nervous, bitter hysterical-spinster aunt, Agnes Moorehead is uncannily powerful, in a hyperrealistic way. (It's a classic performance.) With the amazing old Richard Bennett as the family patriarch, Joseph Cotten, Anne Baxter, and Ray Collins. The film wasn't completed in the form that Welles originally intended, and there are pictorial effects that seem scaled from a much fuller work, but even in this truncated form it's amazing and memorable. Cinematography by Stanley Cortez; editing by Robert Wise.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; May 12-13.)

The Major and the Minor (1942)—Determinedly sassy wartime comedy, in which Ginger Rogers, as a New York career girl down on her luck, without enough money to return home to Iowa, dresses up as a twelve-year-old and buys a half-fare railroad ticket. On the train, she meets Ray Milland, an Army major stationed at a military school for boys, and he is bewildered by his attraction to the overgrown tyke. The major's fiancée (Rita Johnson) becomes suspicious, so the heroine is forced to keep up her charade, even while fending off lecherous youngsters at the school. The farce situations are pushed too broadly, and have a sanctimonious patriotic veneer, but this first American film directed by Billy Wilder was a box-office hit. With Robert Benchley, Frankie Thomas, Diana Lynn as the kid who sees through the heroine's mas-



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querade, and Lela Rogers, Ginger's mother, who plays her mother. The script, by Charles Brackett and Wilder, seems to have been concocted after the title, but it's actually derived from disparate sources—the play "Connie Goes Home," by E. C. Carpenter, and the story "Sunny Goes Home," by Fannie Kilbourne.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 14-15.)

MISTER JOHNSON—An adaptation, directed by Bruce Beresford, of a 1939 Joyce Cary novel about a young Nigerian who works for British colonists in a remote rural outpost. The title character (played by Maynard Eziashi) is an outsized, broadly conceived comic invention—a man who seems to identify more strongly with his employers than with his countrymen. He composes grandiose songs of praise to "England, my home" (he's never been there), and he serves the stolid, pipe-smoking colonial district officer with ferocious enthusiasm. For Johnson, the ways of the white man's civilization are the elements of a romance, an epic song full of color and grand adventure: he looks at the world through the eyes of a poet, and transforms all he sees. The subject of the novel isn't the conflict between the culture of West Africa and that of the imperialist occupiers; it's the contrast between the wild fertility of an artist's imagination and the barrenness of his actual circumstances. The movie is skillful, handsome, and consistently enjoyable, but its studied style makes Cary's story seem a far more conventional colonial satire than it really is. For the most part, Beresford directs like an intelligent man who just isn't quite getting the point. Eziashi, however, is a splendid Johnson: the movie's few surviving traces of the novel's complex wit are all contained in fleeting expressions on the actor's broad, smiling face. Also with Pierce Brosnan, Edward Woodward, Femi Fatoba, Beatie Edney, Bela Enahoro, Nick Reding, and Kwabena Manso. Screenplay by William Boyd; cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (4/8/91) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

NEW JACK CITY—A Saturday night not-so-special, with juicy bits and pieces. Mario Van Peebles' primitive but energetic anti-drug melodrama stars Wesley Snipes as a self-made crack king, Ice-T and Judd Nelson as the cops who try to bring him down, and Van Peebles himself as their boss, modestly named Stone. The screenwriters, Thomas Lee Wright and Barry Michael Cooper, portray Snipes' charismatic villain as a brutal ghetto cousin of the eighties white-collar criminals. He believes that a man must "rob to get rich in the Reagan era." He also must extort and murder. In the most jolting sequence, he turns an entire building into a crack apartment house. The narrative is a hash. With its combination of alienation and derring-do, "New Jack City" is like *Melvin* Van Peebles' "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" and Brian De Palma's "Scarface" (it contains clips from both) crossed with "Serpico" and earnest TV cops-and-robbers series. When the drug lord's romantic problems come to the fore, you wonder if you missed an episode. As a whole, the movie resembles sixties biker movies as well as seventies blaxploitation films: the camera keeps riding the action, and the cast is loose and entertaining.—M.S. (23rd St. West Triplex, and West Side Cinemas. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through May 9.)

THE OBJECT OF BEAUTY—Jake (John Malkovich) and Tina (Andie MacDowell) are a glamorous American couple camping out in a suite in a swank London hotel. They're unable to settle their account, which when the movie begins stands at about six thousand pounds, because Jake, a speculator, has blown all his money on a bad investment. Jake and Tina are unmarried and have no permanent address; they're charming, attractive drifters, getting by on style. In a sense, they're throwbacks to the sophisticated and slightly disreputable couples who floated airily through thirties romantic comedies: no-strings types who stick together for the best shallow reasons—for sex and laughs and the shared kick of living the high life without having to work too hard. The picture, written and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, is conceived as high-style fluff, but it never delivers quite as much irresponsible fun as it promises. It's like a Lubitsch movie without the speed and the grace and the blissful inconsequentiality. Malkovich, however, is as unaccountably magnetic here as he was in "Dangerous Liaisons." His performance is a postmodern mutation of thirties style, an ungodly hybrid of William Powell and Boris Karloff, and it's sensationally funny. This is as original a piece of acting as you'll ever see in a romantic comedy. The supporting players are an unusually lively group: Lolita Davidovich, Peter Riegert, Joss Ackland, and Bill Paterson.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Regency.)

PARIS IS BURNING—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Film Forum.)

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Eastside Cinema, and Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Cinema Village 3rd Avenue; through May 7.)

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS—Adapted from a novel by Thomas Harris, Jonathan Demme's thriller is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. The heroine, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), is an earnest F.B.I. trainee who is selected to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer; her superiors hope that Lecter's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help them catch a serial killer known as Buffalo Bill, who flays his victims. In the course of the movie, these conversations between the trainee and the psychiatrist turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life in return for his hints on how to find the killer. Hopkins plays the monster with a fine, cold relish: he gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra. And the impact of his performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme's style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. Demme keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. The suspense of this manhunt isn't of the straight-ahead kind we're used to: it's reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance—it has an unnerving intimacy.—T.R. (2/25/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, Waverly, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Powered by a lusty satirical vitality, Pietro Germi's "Seduced and Abandoned" (playing May 12 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is a glory of Italian movie comedy. It sends up Sicilian mores that hadn't changed from medieval times to 1964 (when the film came out). The wonderful Stefania Sandrelli plays a precociously sexy but still innocent fifteen-year-old who loses her virginity to her sister's fiancé (Aldo Puglisi). Dressed in her Sunday best, she looks sophisticated; after being seduced and impregnated, she shrinks from her family and comes off as a ravaged girl. Puglisi is sleekly, absurdly creepy—a sexual snake in the grassless, hot, dusty town. The film is only partly a sex comedy. It's mostly a parody of Sicilian propriety, as embodied by Sandrelli's puffed-up quarry-owner father (Saro Urzi, who won Best Actor at Cannes). He instigates a frenzy of face-saving tactics, from a botched assassination to a kidnapping. What Diane Keaton's character in "The Godfather Part II" dubbed "this Sicilian thing"—family honor and vendettas—here gets a coiling, farcical treatment. So does Sicilian law, which clears Puglisi of corrupting a minor if he marries her afterward.

Stylistically, the movie is a masterpiece of mock verismo. Germi delivers his scabrous view of patriarchy with such deftness that he glides by big laughs (like Puglisi's whining "I want a chaste wife") and gets mileage from small ones (like the local marshal's excusing the presence of the attempted-murder weapon to the magistrate: "There are many pistols lying around"). "Seduced and Abandoned" accelerates into febrile overdrive—it's high-octane opera buffa.

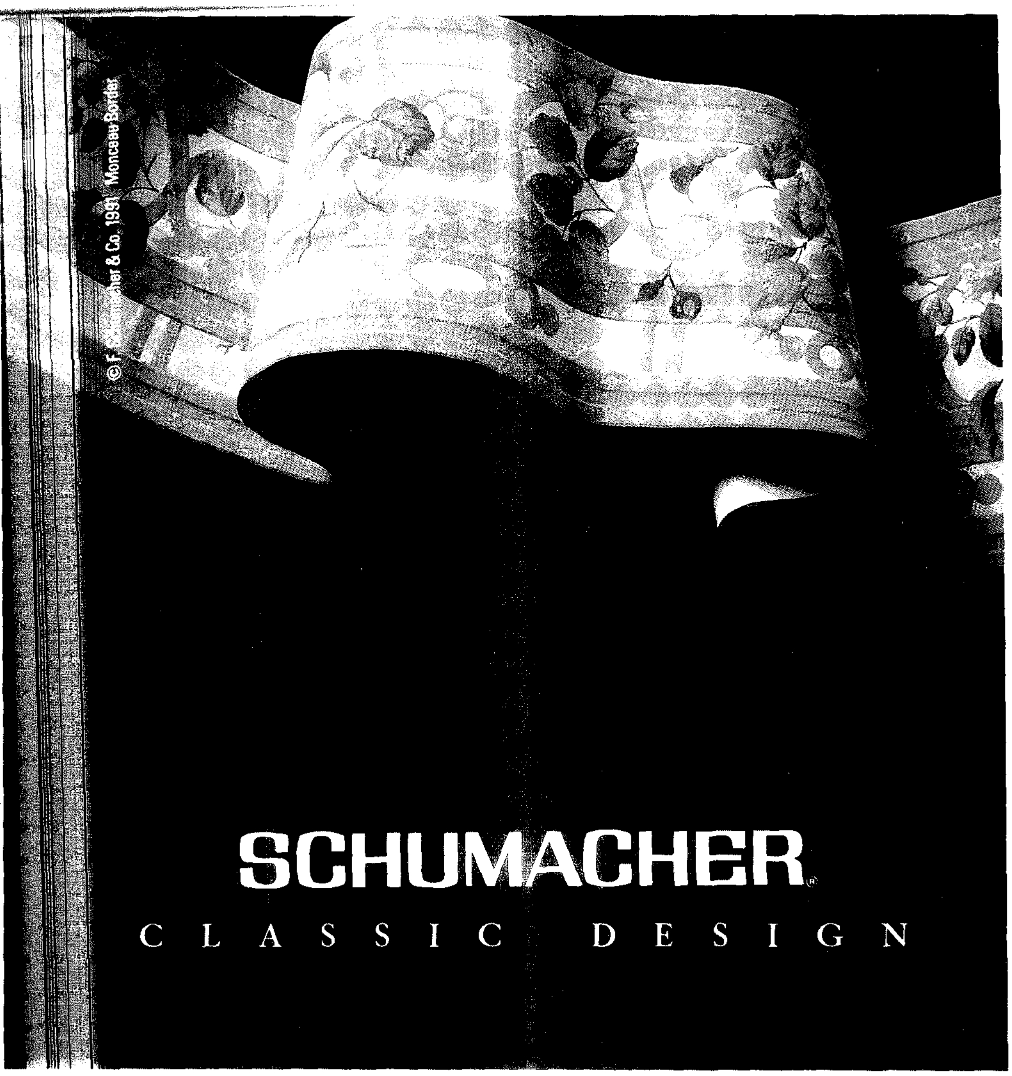
SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY—Julia Roberts, as a frightened young wife who fakes her death and changes her identity to escape her rich husband (Patrick Bergin), a psychopathic perfectionist. Roberts is an incredible object—you can at least see why a perfectionist would want to hang on to her. But she's a blank goddess here, and the settings—Cape Cod and Cedar Falls, Iowa (both shot in North and South Carolina)—are uninspiring. The director, Joseph Ruben, does a smooth job, with snappy editing every time there's a cut to the enraged husband on the wife's trail. There are no surprise twists, though; the picture is a glossy combination of secondhand showing-off-Julia scenes from "Pretty Woman" and secondhand scares from "The Stepfather." Ronald Bass's script, out of a novel by Nancy Price, is one letdown after another.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center.)

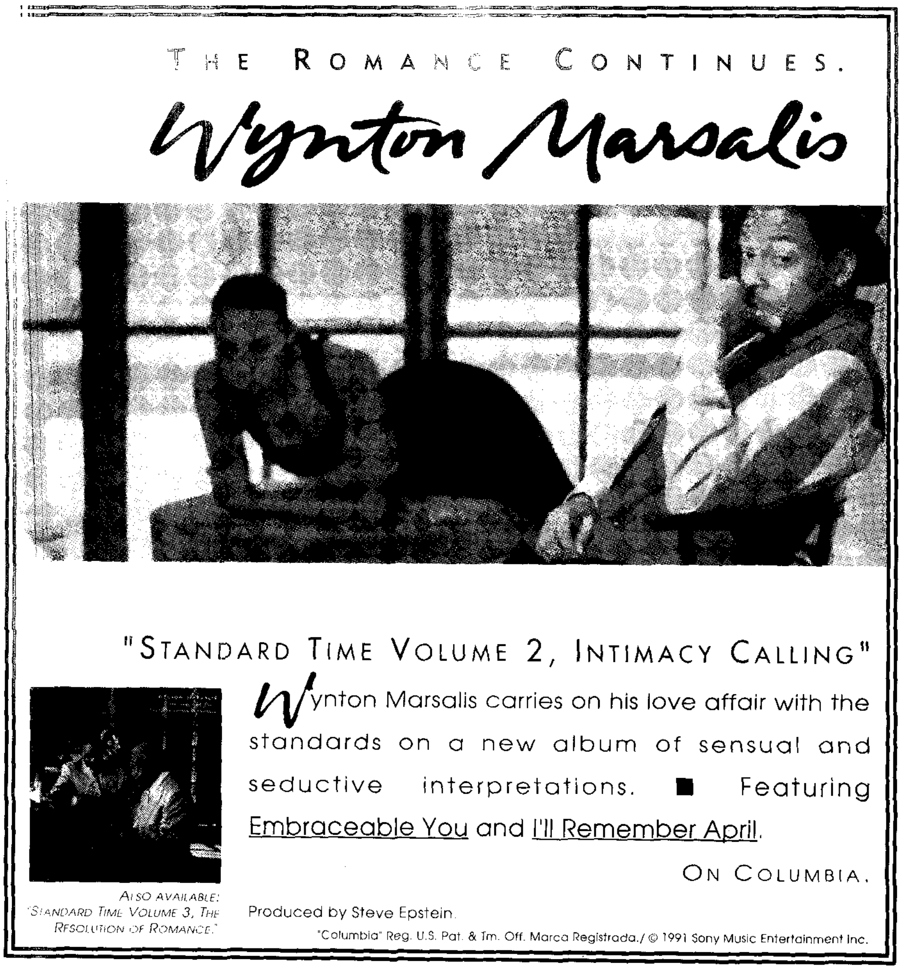
SPARTACUS (1960)—This may be the best-paced and most slyly entertaining of all the decadent-ancient-Rome spectacular films. It's a great big cartoon drama, directed by Stanley

Kubrick, with Kirk Douglas at his most muscular as the slave gladiator Spartacus, who leads a rebellion of his fellow-slaves against the might of Rome. Spartacus makes some conscientious speeches—out of Howard Fast (who wrote the novel) by way of Dalton Trumbo (who did the screenplay)—but there's so much else going on that it's easy to brush off the moralizing. Laurence Olivier is Spartacus' antagonist, Crassus, a devious patrician who wants to rule Rome in the name of order—he is designed as a supersubtle Fascist. Crassus is a wonderfully gaudy character: he takes Tony Curtis, a young "singer of songs," as his sexual favorite, but he also has a fancy for the slave girl whom Spartacus loves—Jean Simmons. She has never been more beautiful, and the emotions that appear on her humor-filled face are blessedly sane. Peter Ustinov is superb as a slave dealer, who along with his grovelling sycophancy and his merchant's greed has his resentments; and Charles Laughton, amusingly wide in his toga, is a wily old Roman senator. (The two of them have a chat about the beneficial effects of corpulence.) As a gladiator who is Spartacus' friend and who is forced to fight him, Woody Strode has the quietest, most elegant physical presence in the movie. Cinematography by Russell Metty; music by Alex North. Hearst's San Simeon was used for some of the locations. (196 minutes).—P.K. (Ziegfeld.)

TRULY, MADLY, DEEPLY—A lovely, original comedy about a young woman, named Nina (Juliet Stevenson), who is obsessed with the memory of her dead lover. The writer and director, Anthony Minghella, establishes an unusual, delicately varied mood, and the film moves gracefully from a realistic mode into a fantastic one. One night, Nina's lover, Jamie (Alan Rickman), reappears in her flat, and his presence seems perfectly natural to us: he has emerged from a setting that is already charged with the heroine's feelings for him. Once he's back, she has to confront, in the most concrete way, what it would really mean to live the rest of her life with a dead guy as her significant other: the movie is less a ghost story than a weird kind of domestic comedy. Minghella draws us into a fresh and startlingly humane vision of modern urban life; the details of the heroine's way of living always seem to point beyond themselves, and there's an emotional unity to everything we see. He writes dialogue that sounds casual but somehow takes us straight to the heart of his work's larger concerns, and he directs the actors beautifully. Rickman is unexpectedly romantic here, and very funny besides. And Stevenson gives a radiant performance: she doesn't have a false moment, or a boring one, in the whole picture. Also with Michael Maloney, Christopher Rózycki, Stella Maris, David Ryall, Deborah Findlay, and the always marvellous Bill Paterson. Cinematography by Remi Adefarasin.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Plaza.)

THE VANISHING—George Sluizer's film has a simple, powerful thriller hook: a young Dutch woman, Saskia (the radiant Johanna Ter Steege), vacationing in the South of France with her boyfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets), walks into a highway rest stop to buy a soda and beer and never comes back. Rex's search for Saskia, which takes place over several years, produces suspense of an unusually melancholy kind. This fiendishly intelligent little movie is adapted from a novel called "The Golden Egg," by the Dutch writer Tim Krabbé (who collaborated with Sluizer on the adaptation), and its form is essentially literary. It's a sophisticated example of the sort of hermetic intellectual mysteries that Borges is famous for: the fates of Saskia and Rex are worked out with an almost geometric precision. But the movie's rigor isn't alienating, and its symmetries are evocative rather than merely clever. The film is about ordinary lives interrupted, hijacked out of time, and Sluizer, with documentary-style attentiveness to detail, does justice to the varied beauty of ordinariness. The narrative is constructed with flawless elegance, but the movie is far less self-contained than it seems: traces of deep feeling keep escaping from the artifice, like puffs of breath into cold, thin air. Not many thrillers have the sort of suggestiveness this picture has. It's a small classic. Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu gives a chilling performance as the perverse, enigmatic villain. In Dutch and French.—T.R. (1/28/91) (Bleecker Movie House.)





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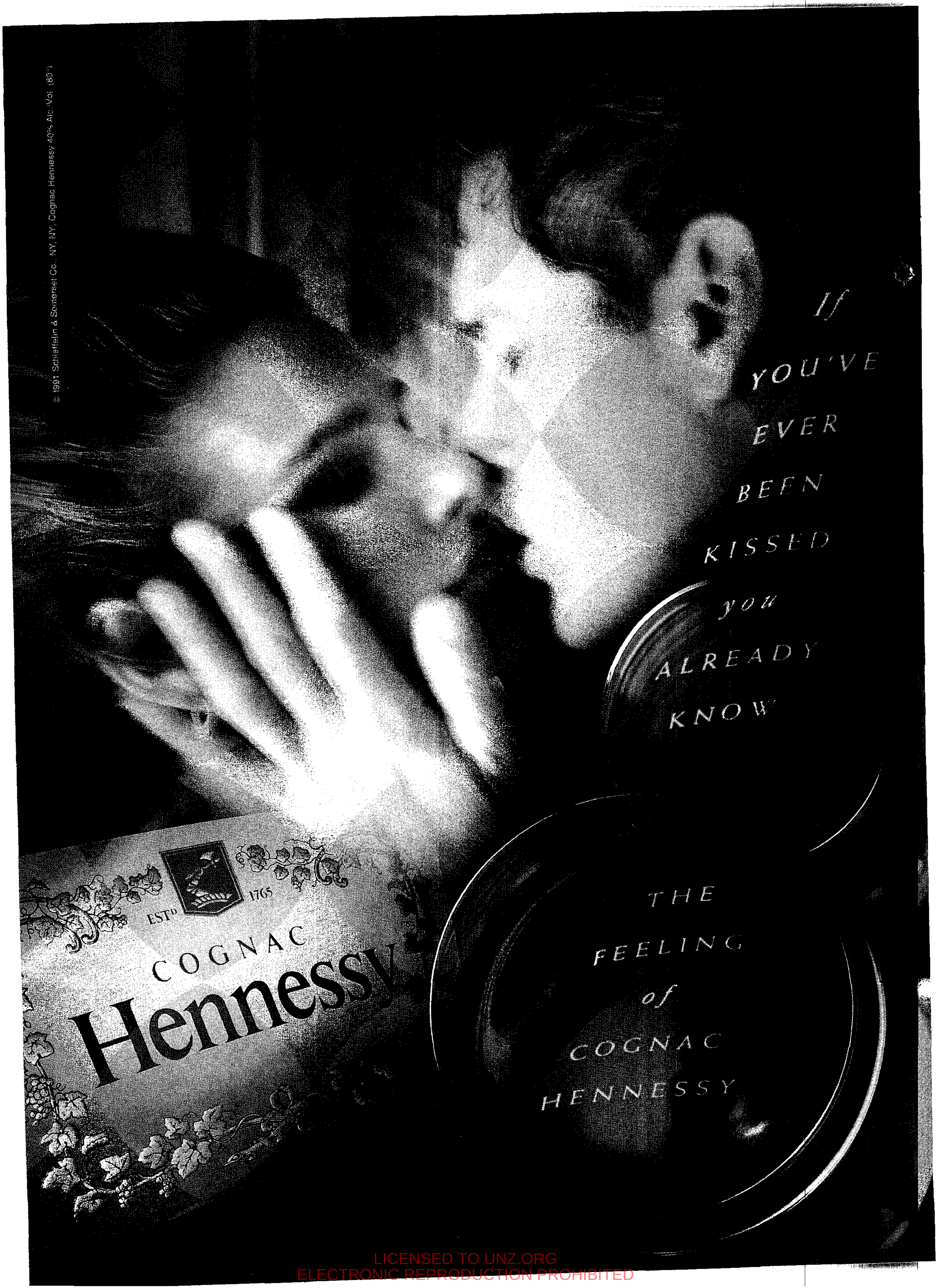

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ADRIAN, a friend of ours, fixed us dinner last week. We hadn't seen him in a while. It was a blustery day, with stiff winds nosing cumulus clouds across the sky, but the papers threatened a heat wave, and our pal Joe had offered to lend Adrian his big Friedrich air-conditioner for the inevitable dog days. We said we'd help Joe lug the thing to Adrian's place, near Gracie Square.

Adrian is a thirty-two-year-old artist who works in wood. His carvings are made on pine boards with an X-Acto knife, and they employ religious imagery, mostly of Christian saints. The carving is shallow, with little nicks taken out of the surface, which is then brightly painted. Adrian's work resembles linoleum cuts or the holy pictures on scapulars, but he isn't carving much these days. He's busy with other things. His conversation has altered to reflect his current preoccupations, and he has a new vocabulary. Where Adrian used to get wrapped up in galleries and theorists, his concerns now center on hairy leukoplakia and fulminant candida, on interlesional therapy and the good and bad points of Vinblastine. There are a lot of abbreviations in Adrian's life. He's one himself. Since 1987, when he was found to have acquired-immunodeficiency syndrome, our friend has become an initialized person—Adrian, the P.W.A.

Adrian still looks good, although he's down from a hundred and ninety-four pounds to a hundred and fifty. He doesn't work out at the gym much, partly because his energy is unreliable, but mostly because he's discouraged by his spots. A year ago, Adrian contracted Kaposi's sarcoma, a cancer that's common among people with AIDS. A lesion on his neck is oval, shaped like a storm system on a television weather map. Pale purple at the edge, it's mottled dark at the center. If you didn't know better, you might mistake it for a giant bee sting. Adrian's body is freckled with such lesions. He's got one on his nose, and a large one on his right wrist, and clusters of them on his left forearm and his torso. They're even in his throat and mouth. The lesions are the aspect of Adrian's illness that's hardest to ignore.

For a long time, Adrian didn't look like a sick person. He didn't feel especially ill, either. As far back as the spring of 1987, he thought he might be HIV-positive, because a blood test had shown that his T-cell count was 230. (Normal is around 900; he now registers about 3). Yet he felt O.K. That summer, though, he found himself having trouble breathing. A chest X-ray revealed nothing, but within weeks he couldn't make it up the four flights to his apartment without stopping. He was waterlogged, he said. He breathed in tiny, labored sips. When Adrian finally got spooked enough by his condition to check in to the emergency room at Lenox Hill, a doctor X-rayed him again and declared that he had the lungs of a seventy-year-old coal miner. The two had the following exchange:

Coca-Cola
Coca-Cola
FRANKS
BURGERS
SPECIAL
Beef Franks
Beef Franks
HEBREW NATIONAL

"Are you a drug addict?"

"No."

"Have you ever been transfused?"

"No."

"Are you a homosexual?"

Bingo. Adrian entered into full-blown AIDS the way many people do—by coming down with *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia. "I never had the luxury of ARC," he says, meaning the milder AIDS-related complex.

One thing we've learned from Adrian is that AIDS is not sudden death—at least, not for most white, middle-class men. It's a syndrome, he often reminds us—a more or less protracted process, whose most salient feature is uncertainty about what comes next. "People forget that it's not even one disease," he says. People with AIDS are susceptible to more than three hundred types of opportunistic infection, and everyone with AIDS has one particularly feared malady: cytomegalovirus retinitis, say, which often causes blindness, or tuberculosis, or meningitis, or dementia. Adrian's terror was Kaposi's sarcoma. "With KS," he once told us, "there's a lot of reality there as far as being sick goes." All the same, he managed pretty well when the lesions started to bloom.

Sometimes people with AIDS talk about their disease as a journey. And it does seem as though the illness were a trip into terra incognita, with battered signposts, and turning points, but no clear path. Maybe that's true of any serious illness. By the end of March, the disease had been diagnosed in 36,609 New York State residents, and

24,314 of them had died. It occurs to us that Adrian and his fellow-travellers have acquired, along with an immune-deficiency syndrome, a tremendous and unrecognized body of lore. If you spend any time around Adrian, or other P.W.A.s, you become privy to all sorts of arcana about medicines and treatments and specialists and holistic therapies and care groups and healing circles. You learn about cobalt versus electron radiation, about AZT in low or high doses, about experimental DDI and DDC, about therapies to fight wasting syndrome, and about obscure forms of t.b. You encounter the nonagenarian Romanian physician who claims to have a cure, and the acupuncturist-physician who wins ballroom-dancing prizes when she isn't treating AIDS. You hear "prophylaxis" used in verb form. ("The doctors are always trying to get you to prophylax for infection," Adrian says.) And you also hear, unspoken, the deeply held wish that no one had cause to use any of this information.

Adrian got better his first year. For a time, he actually thrived. He stayed in good shape until last October, but lately he's been sick a lot, and tired. As his repertoire of illness grows, his personal compass is reduced. He now needs a volunteer buddy to handle his laundry and chores. Another friend had picked up the food for dinner: fusilli, zucchini, broccoli, and tiny white eggplants. Adrian felt well enough to cook. "Bring some Italian bread, and maybe some grated Romano cheese," he told us on the phone. By the time we arrived, Adrian had cut up the vegetables and arranged them, as if for a still-life, to make pasta primavera. He had set three votive candles in dishes around the small rooms of his apartment. We'd brought some hyacinths we bought at the Union Square Greenmarket. And we ducked back to the car, huffed the air-conditioner upstairs, and set it in a bedroom.

Adrian's isn't a grand space or a squalid space; it doesn't seem much like an artist's quarters. It's monkish, almost, and serene. The details tend to be pleasing: a latch on his casement window was hand-forged by a blacksmith in Northport, Long Island; the frame of his doorway is hand-carved with suns; there are six bunches of dried roses pinned upside down to a bookcase. Adrian's antifungal medications are kept in a handsome black box in the bathroom, and though the box is not a design statement it says something about Adrian all the same. He hasn't yet reached the stage where his place will resemble a hospital room. You wouldn't guess that he spends Sunday mornings giving himself interlesional chemotherapy by injection. By containing his medical paraphernalia, it seems, he manages in a small way to contain his illness. "When you're well, you lose the sense of how really hard it is to be sick," Adrian told us a couple of weeks ago. "Now that I'm sick, I try to hold on to what I'm about in the world."

Many obvious things are lost to AIDS. The most painful losses are sometimes of things that a healthy person would never think of. After one particularly heavy round of chemotherapy, Adrian was robbed of his body smell. Until he mentioned it, we'd never thought of life without our familiar, identifying odors. Hardest of all, he says, has been the loss of friends—not just to death, although most of Adrian's original crowd has died. "My best friend, of twelve years, lost his lover," Adrian once told us. "He'd had KS. And after he died my friend said, 'I just can't go through this with you. I'm really frightened.' To him, I wasn't Adrian anymore. I wasn't his best friend, the person who danced with him all night at Studio 54, the person he never ran out of things to talk about with. I was Adrian who has AIDS." He added, "What's nice now is having people around you who just really want to be around you."

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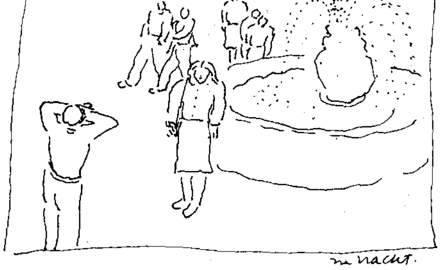
Restoration

IN the west face of the west pier of the Washington Arch, in Washington Square Park, is a little wooden door. The door opens onto a narrow, winding stairway, which leads to a brick-lined chamber within the top of the arch and, beyond that, to the roof of the arch. In an older and more innocent time, the door was apparently sometimes left unlocked. In the winter of 1917, the artists Marcel Duchamp and John Sloan and some of their friends, including the actor Charles Ellis and Sloan's student Gertrude Drick, climbed to the top of the arch with sandwiches and coffee (and with hot-water bottles to sit on), and held a party to declare and celebrate the secession of Greenwich Village from the United States. John Sloan made a wonderful engraving of the secessionists enjoying their picnic—Duchamp bending forward to eat a sandwich, a man with a briar pipe who seems to be drawing (is it Sloan?), and balloons flying to announce the birth of the new nation.

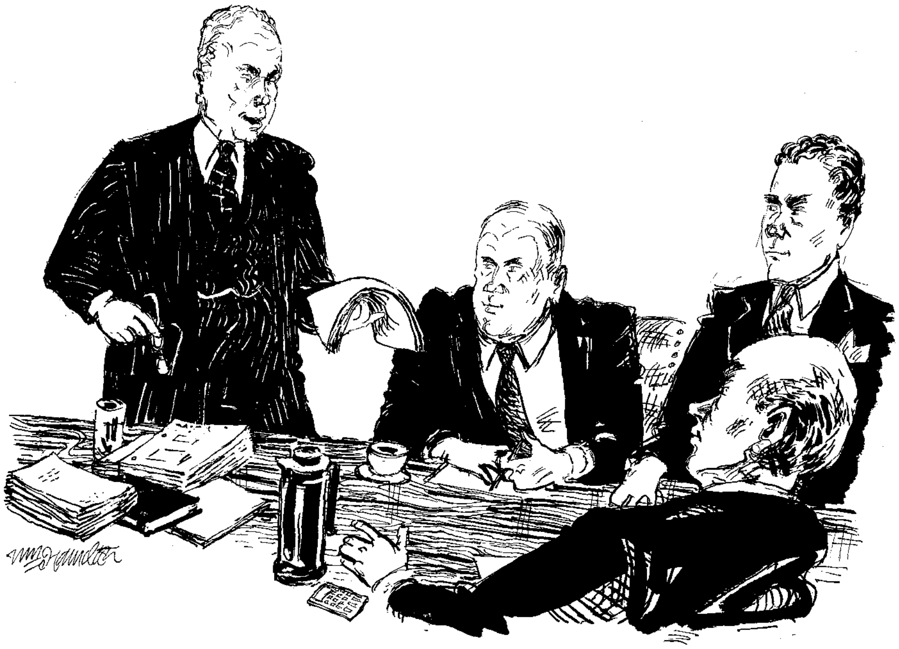


The door has almost never been officially—or legally—opened since. (It is said that once a homeless man broke in and managed to live at the top of the arch for quite a while, until he got careless and hung his laundry on a line and was found out.) On a recent Wednesday morning, however, a number of representatives of various city departments and city groups—Parks, the Central Park Conservancy, Police—showed up early to open the door, and to allow a few select people to walk around inside the arch and on top of it. The occasion was a survey that the architectural firm of Swanke Hayden Connell was conducting as part of preliminary work on restoration of the arch. Earlier, the architects had studied the outer facing of the arch, and now they were going to figure out what needed to be done to the interior and to the top.

The city people milled around while they waited for the arrival of Theodore H. M. Prudon, of Swanke Hayden Connell, who is the project director of the first stages of the restoration. Mr. Prudon is a Dutch-born architect and restoration expert who teaches at Columbia and at Pratt, and he has been responsible for the restoration of, among other things, the terra-cotta exterior of the Woolworth Building; the lobby and the outer shell of the old Equitable Building; the brownstone exterior of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church; and a lot of Bethesda Terrace, in Central Park, including the flagpoles and banners. Upon his arrival at the arch, Mr. Prudon was instantly recognizable, since, like all successful New York architects, he was almost impossibly dapper, brisk, and cheerful, and had the kind of virtuous, complacent glow that is peculiar to his profession—as though he had just bicycled down from Columbia and had spruced up some Federal-style town houses and restored a Victorian façade or two along the way. The guys from the city, by contrast, looked exhausted even before the workday began.

Mr. Prudon stood on the south side of the arch and looked up at it. "Of course, it's a Roman form—the triumphal arch," he said. He speaks with a Dutch accent, and sounds disconcertingly like Van Damme, the martial-arts actor. "I've never figured out why Americans landed so strongly on the arch, and left the column, the other Roman triumphal form, mostly alone. A century ago, they put up a series of temporary paste-and-paper arches to celebrate the centennial of Washington's Inauguration here—the only New York Presidential Inauguration—and this arch, too, is meant to commemorate that local event. Stanford White got the commission, at a time when he was getting just about every commission around. The arch was begun in 1889 and finished in 1892. It's covered in a very specific kind of marble—Tuckahoe marble. There are all these specific kinds of marble that come from the quarries up and down the Hudson—Hastings-on-Hudson marble, Sing Sing marble—and one of the hard questions we have to consider is whether or not we can, or should, restore the arch with exactly the kind of marble that was first used." With that, he wheeled around to the little door, went in, and began to climb the stairs. The people from the city trudged behind him.

"It's funny what you find stored away in old structures like this," he said, shining a flashlight along the side wall. "Look at the tilework! It looks—Ha!" He held out a hand to halt the ascent. "I do believe this is Guastevino work," he said, and he explained that the Guastevinos were a Catalan father and son who lived in New York at the turn of the century and practiced and improved a Catalan style of tile-setting that allowed them to cover great surfaces without excessive scaffolding. The Guastevinos are very chic in tile-restoration circles these days.



"Gentlemen, yours is going to be one of this period's seminal bankruptcies."

• •

The ascent continued, and pretty soon Mr. Prudon reached the brick-lined chamber, about fifteen feet high and thirty feet long—the inside of the crosspiece of the arch. It was empty save for a number of old music stands. "What are these for?" he asked. "What happened? They had band concerts out there, and they kept the music stands inside? Lot of work, bringing them up and down those little stairs. Does that make sense?"

Mr. Prudon ascended a few more stairs and walked out onto the tar-papered roof, which commands views up Fifth Avenue and down toward SoHo. "You realize, of course, what we have here?" he said to the people who came panting up behind him. "We have a unique vista of lower Fifth Avenue, looking north. Think of it—there is almost no place in Manhattan where you get an unimpeded view of Fifth Avenue looking north. It is a view that has been almost unchanged over the last thirty or forty years." It was true: the view up the Avenue was almost exactly the one that Holly Golightly or Holden Caulfield might have seen. "We also get a survey of the life of Stanford White," Mr. Prudon went on, turning to look south. "This arch, of course, and across the way is the old Judson Memorial Baptist Church—a quasi-Gothic church with a pseudo-Venetian tower. And back that way you can see, over there, the spot where his Madison Square Garden stood. But what really excites me is the view of the park below. Look—that is perfect early-sixties pseudo-Scandinavian park design."

An untutored observer would have seen only the usual, desultory spread of Washington Square Park in the early morning: the dope dealers, the mothers with children, the few surviving folksingers of the Western world. But Mr. Prudon saw a lot more. "The pictorial spread of the materials, the way the trees are used as decorative exclamations, the play of the various textures and surfaces," he said. "It's a style of park design that was begun in Scandinavia, where it's really appropriate, since trees are so rare there. But then it became all the rage throughout the world in the next decade, and so we find it transplanted to the most unlikely, temperate climates. You see, those styles—of the late fifties and early sixties—are the ones that are most exciting to the restorer. We've already mastered so much of the grammar and vocabulary of nineteenth-century restoration that the challenges it provides are limited. But late-fifties, early-sixties style—that's a challenge! Someday, we'll even have to restore that thing." He waved a hand across the park toward what may be the single ugliest building in New York: the Catholic Center at N.Y.U.—the building with big, random-looking pieces of curved steel stuck on one side and a clunky-looking stained-glass window on the other. "That is *perfect* debased Le Corbusier," he said. "We hardly see that as a style now—it falls right into our aesthetic blind spot. But it *is* a style, with its own rules and little secret harmonies, and someday it will be the job of some restorer to make that thing sing again—or whatever the sound is that it makes. The advantage we American restorers have over our European cousins, who think in centuries, is that we *can* think in those small blocks. We can think of making something precisely 1868, or exactly as it ought to have been in 1904. We can focus on 1912 style, or spend our time absorbed in the tiling techniques of 1907."

Mr. Prudon looked around the little expanse of veranda, cold in the morning wind, and said, "You know, after I saw the Sloan engraving I was half hoping to find a balloon up here, or a hot-water bottle—some remnant of the secession. By now, of course, it would be a Duchamp—a ready-made treasure."

Sea Hunt

Penny Beach, at the foot of Hylan Boulevard, on the northern end of Staten Island, looks across the Narrows of Upper New York Bay toward Brooklyn and Manhattan. It's cluttered with washed-up creosote-soaked timbers and the occasional bedframe and car stereo, and with a huge amount of sea glass, which makes it resemble the jewelled cover of a medieval book. One blustery day recently, we found three scuba divers there: James Tony Dobson, John Ford, and Jim Stone. Dobson and Stone are heating-and-cooling engineers who work at the Paine Webber Building, on Sixth Avenue, and Ford is a retired Staten Island Ferry captain. Dobson was zipping himself into a dry suit—a waterproof rubber suit, something like a space suit, that divers wear to keep themselves alive in cold water. Ford was just heading for the bottom of the Narrows. Stone, a newly certified scuba diver, with less than a month's experience diving on urban reefs, was struggling to put on a rented dry suit.

"This is our favorite place," Dobson said. His eyes travelled across the bay to Manhattan, six miles away. "It's like a city dump out there."

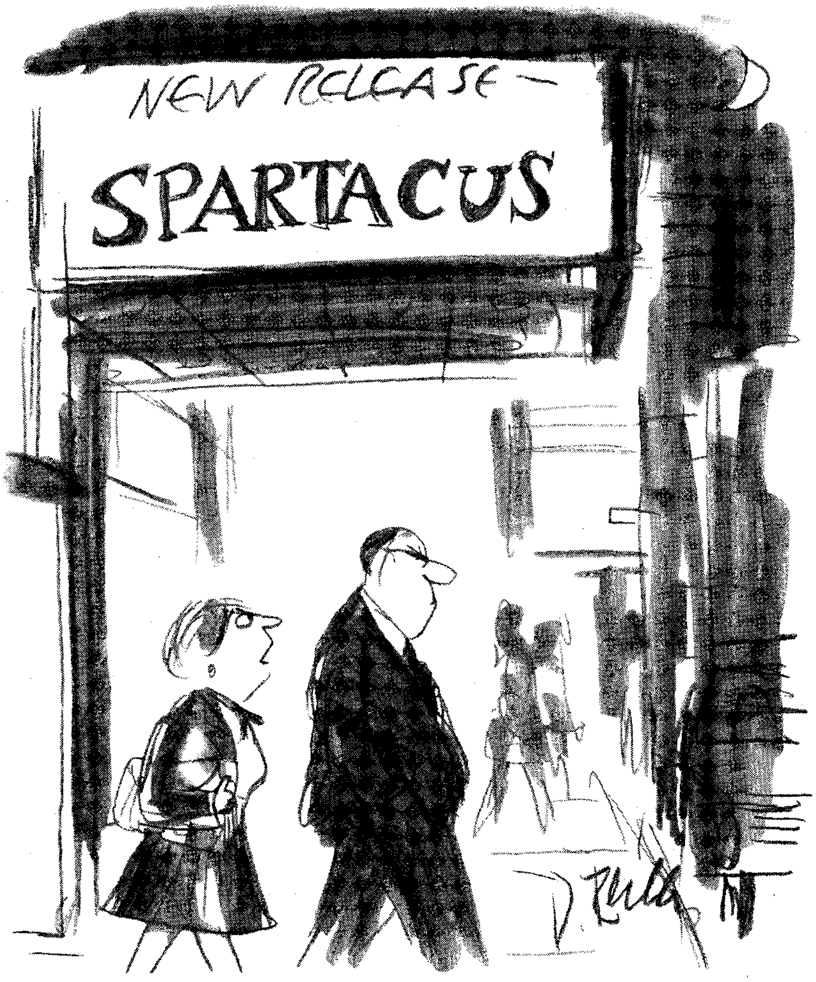
From Staten Island, the bottom drops steeply to seventy feet and then levels off, he explained. The currents can be fierce, and the water is often nearly opaque. When Dobson and Ford dive together, they are sometimes connected by a buddy line—a rope stretched between them—and they tug on it to send messages to each other. They carry net bags—goodie bags—and they follow their compasses toward Wall Street, or toward Brooklyn, or toward the Verrazano Bridge, swimming through gray twilight, picking up things and putting them in their goodie bags, and going deep when they pass under shipping lanes. At flood tide, clear ocean water surges into the bay, and then the water becomes as transparent as air, and suddenly they find themselves flying over a vast junk yard that extends as far as the eye can see. In winter, seventy feet above their heads it may be snowing.

A patch of effervescence appeared just offshore, and Captain Ford's head emerged. He pulled off his fins and stood up; he was wearing a wetsuit. Ford is a beefy man in his early sixties, and, with ninety pounds of steel tanks and lead weights and whip hoses and gauges and timers and regulators attached to him, he moved slowly onto the beach. "The water is forty-two degrees, and the visibility is like this," he said, holding his hands a couple of feet apart. "It's a little cold down there. I can't feel my hands anymore."

Jim Stone had got his neoprene hood stuck around his face, and he staggered, clutching at his head.

"He can't breathe!" Dobson cried. He and Ford pulled the hood off Stone's head, and Stone, red-faced, sat down on a timber. Dobson waded into the bay and lay floating on his back. A container ship steamed past, coming under the Verrazano.

Ford said, "You can hear a ship's screws a quarter of a mile away under-



"Another thing I remember about the 1960 release is that back then you identified with the slaves."

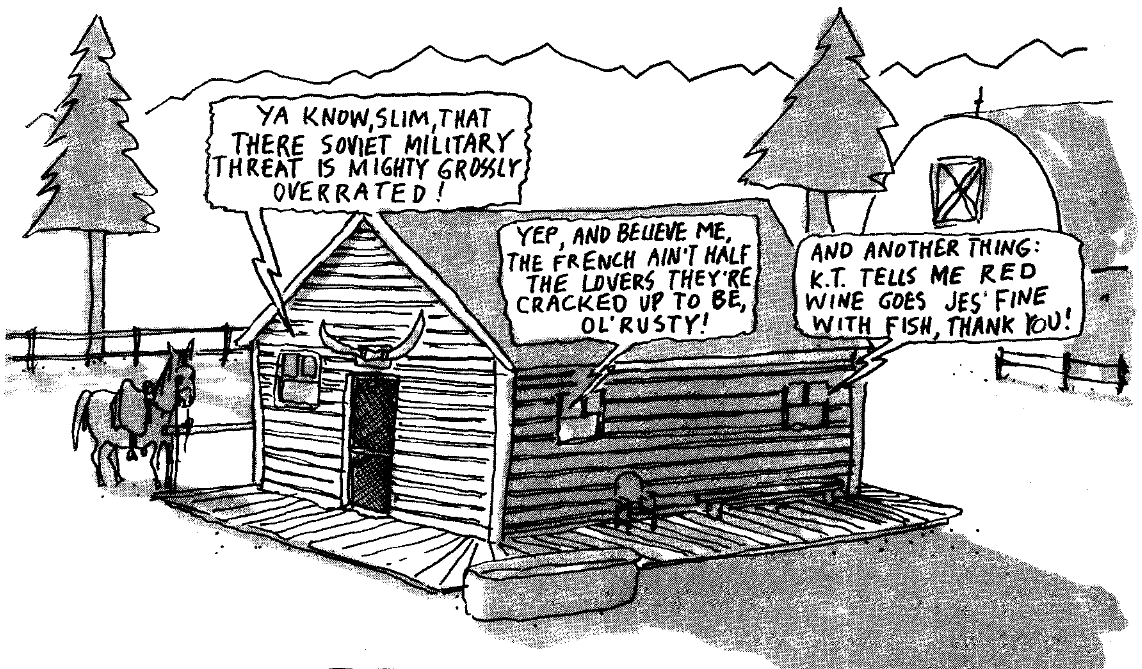
water. You just hope they don't drop an anchor on you. When a tugboat's coming, you say a prayer. They can suck you right off the bottom when they go overhead. If you are subject to claustrophobia, you shouldn't go down there."

Dobson and Ford have found several ships' boilers near the Staten Island Ferry terminal, and also a couple of automobiles and some monstrous tires from road graders. The bottom of the harbor is peppered evenly with truck tires, and there's a lobster living inside every one. Sometimes the divers notice seahorses floating past their heads. Once, near the Verrazano Bridge, they discovered a ship's propeller embedded in the bottom, with blades sticking up eight feet. The propeller loomed out of the haze like a monument. They were wildly excited, because a ship's propeller can consist of around twenty tons of yellow brass, with a scrap value of twenty thousand dollars. They hacked at it with chisels and hammers for a couple of days, trying to get down to brass, but all they got was rust and more rust. It was made of cast steel—probably a cheap screw that broke off a Kaiser Liberty ship.

They've found great lengths of hawser, and timbers from old sailing vessels, and brass portholes and brass railings and brass stanchions and brass pipes, and iron anchors and puddled-iron gratings, and an outboard motor and a fishing rod and an airplane engine with a propeller attached to it and a mysterious brass disk, two feet across, engraved with a star. They keep all this stuff in Dobson's basement, except for the outboard motor (Dobson couldn't start it, so he left it on the street for the garbageman) and the airplane engine, which remains on the bottom. They've found about a hundred antique molded-glass bottles. They've found enough galley silverware and dinner plates to serve a dinner party, except that none of the pieces match, because they came from different ships. They once found a mushroom anchor bloated by cancerous rust to twice its original size. It was a keeper. They lashed ropes around it and lifted it off the bottom with the help of several inner tubes filled with air, and the thing sits in Dobson's basement. His wife suggested that he throw it out, along with everything else, but he thinks his rust-simulacrum of an anchor is kind of wonderful.

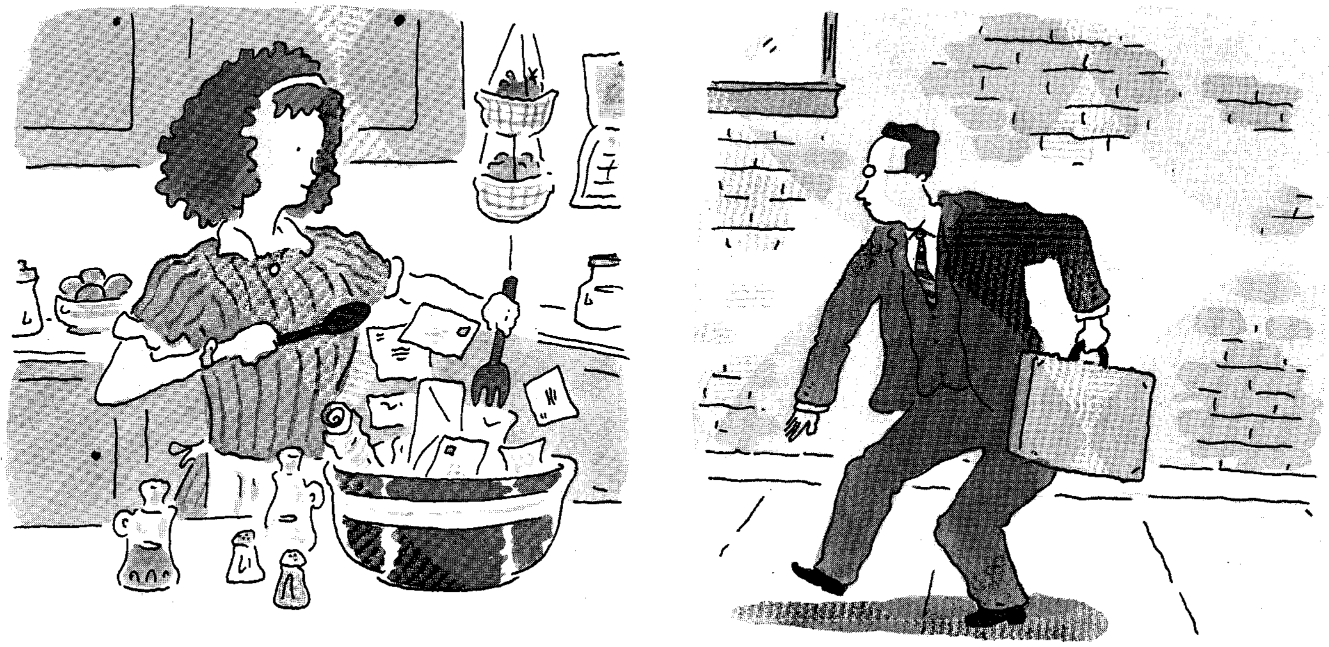
One time, Ford spotted something shiny on the bottom, in a patch of sand. He picked it up. It was a gold cross, about eight inches long, studded with rubies and diamonds. He tugged on the buddy line. Dobson came over, and a cloud of bubbles flew up around his face—Dobson was shouting. They started digging in the sand, and an hour later they had collected a dozen loose pearls, a gold necklace, two gold bracelets, several diamond-and-gold rings, a handful of clasp pins, and a commemorative coin from the Seattle World's Fair. By then, Dobson was running low on air. He wanted to mark the spot, so that they could return to it later, and he went off in search of something to tie a buoy to. He found a shopping cart, and began to fill it with rocks, to anchor it securely to the bottom, but in his excitement he got himself stuck head first in the cart. Then it turned over on him and pinned him to the bottom. Ford was so busy searching for jewelry that he didn't notice what had happened to his partner, who was struggling inside the cart and was nearly out of air. "It was a shaky moment," Dobson explained. Dobson, who is sixty-five years old, didn't want to die inside a shopping cart at the bottom of New York Bay just after striking it rich. He unstrapped his air tanks and left them inside the cart and made a free ascent, thirty feet to the surface. Later, he and Ford spread the jewelry out on Penny Beach. The cross was made of gold-plated tin, set with colored glass, and the rest of the stuff was costume jewelry. "I believe somebody robbed a house," Dobson said. "When he discovered he had stolen a bunch of costume jewelry, he threw it away."

Captain Ford, who had been in the Narrows for almost half an hour in his wetsuit, declared that he was too cold to do any more diving. Stone declared that his rented dry suit didn't fit, and he put on a wetsuit instead, strapped on his tanks, and headed down in the direction of Brooklyn. Dobson, who was floating on his back in his dry suit, enjoying the sun on his face, said he'd decided not to visit the bottom just now. He wallowed to shore, stood up on the beach, unzipped his dry suit, and stepped out of it. He was wearing blue-jeans and a sweatshirt. "I've got to get to work," he said.


YA KNOW, SLIM, THAT THERE SOVIET MILITARY THREAT IS MIGHTY GROSSLY OVERRATED!
YEP, AND BELIEVE ME, THE FRENCH AIN'T HALF THE LOVERS THEY'RE CRACKED UP TO BE, OL' RUSTY!
AND ANOTHER THING: K.T. TELLS ME RED WINE GOES JES' FINE WITH FISH, THANK YOU!
CRAWFORD

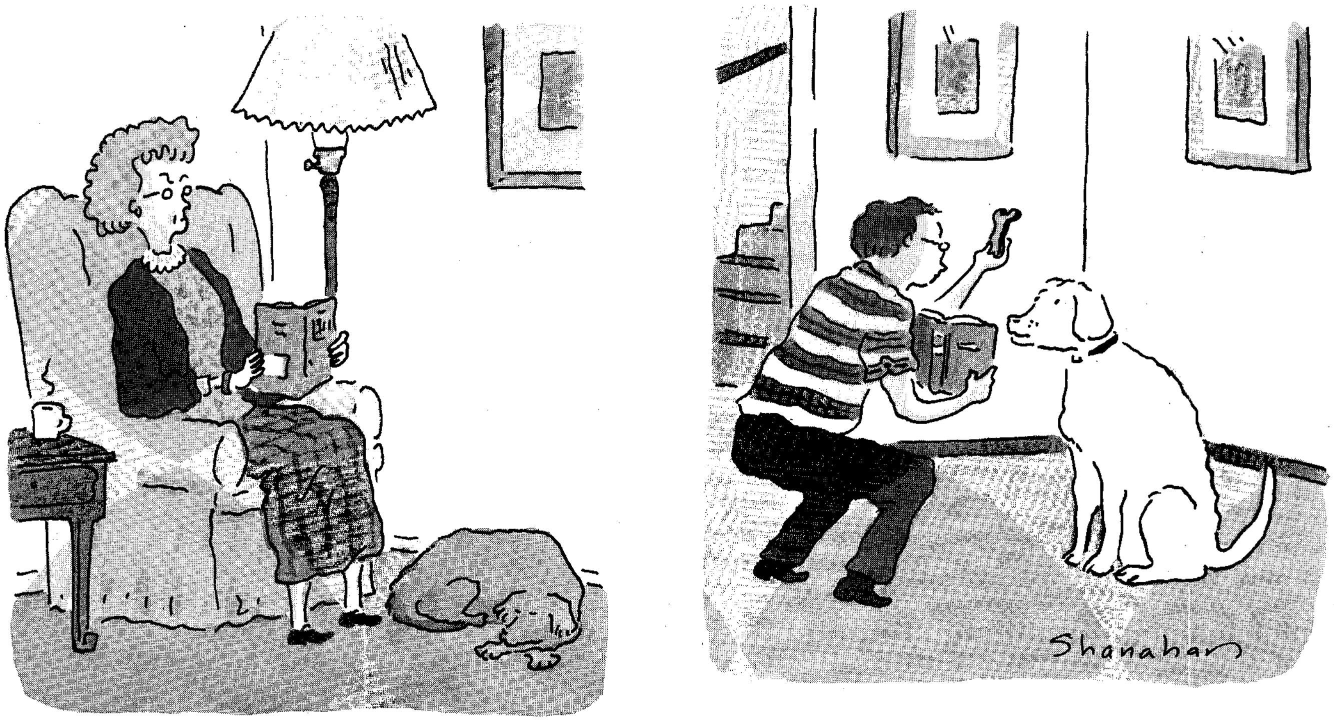
DEBUNKHOUSE

Four Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Planet



Eat your mail.

Don't drag your feet when you walk.



Do crossword puzzles in your head.

Teach your pet to perform photosynthesis.

A LOVELY DAY

THAT giant ball of fire the sun was making its way through the Northern Hemisphere for the summer solstice, but I had made a plan to photograph seven doctors with their dogs, and the first doctor and his dog were set for what turned into the hottest day of June.

It had taken me months to work my way up to this photograph. First I had to be cured, so that I no longer needed the services of the first doctor, a reproductive surgeon. Then I had to photograph him in his academic office, then in his clinical office, then in the hospital corridor carrying his overstuffed, worn-out briefcase. Then I had to photograph the dog alone, and, finally, the supreme photograph—the doctor and his dog together.

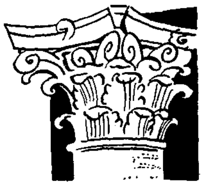
When the idea first came to me, I was nearing the end of my time as a patient but had not yet been dismissed. I told him about my plan, and asked, "Can we talk about the photograph now, or should we wait until I'm cured?"

"Wait till you're cured," the surgeon said. Then he shouted, "Right now you have me fused with your uterus."

Once I was cured, I noticed that the goal of reproduction had receded into the background and had been replaced by the goal of producing photographs of the surgeon, especially the surgeon and his dog. I had first encountered the dog when the doctor agreed to allow me to photograph a group of reproductive surgeons who were gathering for a dinner meeting at his house. I thought this subject matter would be amusing and fascinating for various reasons. Although he had seen some of my photographs, the best ones didn't interest him. "I'm too busy for surrealism," he yelled as he walked down the hall. "But take any photograph you want. A photographer once came to take a picture of a tree we have." Unfortunately, while the cure was dragging on and the busy surgeon was racing around the world to medical conferences, the short winter days were getting longer as the long hot days of summer were forcing their way in.

Even in March I knew the sun was getting ready to encroach upon everyone's plans, because one muggy warm day I found it was necessary to use the car air-conditioner on the way out of New York to Southampton, but it apparently had no Freon left. I attempted to live in Southampton all the time but could not because of my husband's profession. "I can't be a dean at Southampton U.," he'd say. Only a university in the filthy, decaying city was right for his line of work, dean at the school of architecture. The man I had hired to drive was wearing what appeared to be an all-polyester blue-and-pink plaid shirt, and he had the sleeves rolled up. The shirt fabric would not crease at all; it looked like something spun out of the contents of one of those tubes children use to blow plastic bubbles with. In the heat and the traffic my driver tried to keep a stiff upper lip—in fact, his facial expression was always the clench-jawed, hollow-cheeked look of the F.B.I. man he had been.

I knew this driver's whole life story and the life stories of all the other drivers I'd had to hire to drive me out of New York. My own terrifying driving experiences and my witnessing a fistfight on the Hampton Jitney made this private driving service a necessity. I knew that this driver had learned to stop drinking milk while at F.B.I. school, that he had changed all his eating habits during that time, and that his wife had "taken this opportunity to lose forty pounds." I knew that he and his "whole family enjoyed stir-frying in a wok"—and this encouraged me until he told me the ingredients he liked to stir-fry: beef, pork, and two omelettes cut into tiny pieces, all to be stuffed into spring rolls.



This was a big part of my life, sitting in the back seat of our fifteen-year-old Volvo station wagon with my briefcase, my camera case, my photographs, and my Walkman and the "Trout" Quintet. The "Trout" Quintet was the only piece of music I could stand anymore for the trip, and I was on my way to not being able to stand that, either. I'd sit and listen to these ingredients and these life stories as we went up the incline of the Long Island Expressway toward the orange-and-white gas tanks. Even on the Northern State Parkway the driver's wok recipes sounded sickening, but, certainly, anything would sound more sickening on that stretch of road to the tanks.

To rid myself of useless, obsessive thoughts about heat, plastic, and the consumption of animal products, one warm January day I had decided to start the project of photographing these seven doctors and their dogs. My photographs of flowers in every stage of decline were "just not what people want to see," a gallery owner had told me the week before.

But when I saw the reproductive surgeon, Dr. Arnold Loquesto, at home with his dog, I knew that this was something everyone in the world would want to see. If not everyone in the world, then a few people in a few cities and a few towns. No, all doctors and patients would have to be interested in these photographs, because a photograph of a doctor with his dog—especially this doctor and his dog—would show what no other kind of photograph of doctors showed. I had the idea that the way these doctors looked at their dogs would reveal what I was trying to discover—either the evil in their natures, or the kindness, or both the evil and the kindness.

Dr. Loquesto seemed to be the most powerful doctor in the world. No one could tell me how he had come to this position of power. Some people didn't want to discuss the subject and just shrugged. They had probably suffered under his reign of terror. Everyone tried to follow this doctor's orders, everyone feared this doctor, and the medical staff at the great Massachusetts hospital and medical school where he ruled seemed to tremble with fright when his thundering footsteps announced his arrival at the clinic. He had the deepest and loudest voice I'd ever heard. Immediately I pictured him as King Lear, though his style was great comedy, not great tragedy. Many actors struggled and trained throughout their careers to have the booming voice of Dr. Loquesto, a voice that could be thrown across long corridors through closed doors of examining rooms and operating rooms, and could wake patients from light or even medium anesthesia as he operated on them. His fame could be attributed as much to the things he had shouted at everyone as to his surgical skills. Once, after a medical test, he warned me, "If you're going to get nauseated I'm leaving, because that's one thing I can't stand.”

But with his dog everything was different. His little wild dog would jump up on the humans in the dining room, as well as on the surgeon himself, and the surgeon would order the dog to get down, but the dog would ignore him. Everyone followed the surgeon's orders except his dog, and the surgeon did not mind this. At home, as I discovered when I attended that first dinner meeting of the reproductive surgeons, his dog jumped around and did whatever he pleased, leaping at the doctor's wife, scampering about, biting his leash, biting my own wrist at one point, and jumping onto people's plates. The doctors gathered in the surgeon's study for that buffet dinner did not see the comical aspects of the relationship, and proceeded with their discussion of some dull statistic from an article they were all reading. Once, during the evening, when the surgeon was taking a handful of popcorn, even though he had just eaten dinner and dessert, as the dog jumped up with his paws on the surgeon's chest he appeared to be almost as tall as the doctor, though the doctor was of average height and the dog was very small.

One of my greatest fears as I tried to schedule the photograph of the surgeon and his dog was that the dog would have grown beyond this stage of behavior by the time the surgeon was free for the photography session. Because when his three secretaries read me his schedule for February and March—the last good months before the hot weather began—I saw that the doctor was really too busy for me to ask for time for this appointment. Each of his three secretaries had a different version of his schedule, which she would be glad to rattle off: “He's here the fourth, he's away the sixth, he's back the seventh, he has surgery the eighth, he flies to Brazil in the afternoon, he's back the tenth for one day.”

I remembered the panic caused by hearing one of these schedules when I was still the patient of the powerful surgeon. Because what if you needed him? He was never there. “I'm here today,” he'd say enthusiastically when this subject came up. “I leave my number, wherever I am.” And this was true—when he was travelling you could call him at 9 P.M. and hear the sound of a TV program in the background. What could the lonely surgeon be watching in his first-class hotel room? “I stay in some seedy third-rate hotels,” the surgeon told me when I once asked about the accommodations on his trips, and that was something I didn't have the heart to picture. Also what he was watching on television was something I didn't want to know. It didn't sound like the news. I knew if I asked he would tell me. That was the generous part of his personality—he'd tell you anything, no matter how badly it might reflect upon his character.

WHAT I could see happening in the surgeon's calendar was that there would be no day I dared to ask for until June. I pictured the dog's growth from March to June, and it worried me. I knew the dog would be different. I thought about the six other doctors and their dogs. Some of these dogs were not young. A dog could die of old age, or be run down in the road. A doctor might have to replace his dog with another pet. I might arrive to find a doctor alone with a parakeet. One of the doctors himself might die. That wouldn't be as bad. Because only some of these doctors were great men; several were hateful, if not evil men. Maybe the photographs would show that there were no great men in medicine.

I knew nothing about the growth patterns of dogs. I did know that a kitten could get to be a cat in a few months. I had just watched my neighbor's kitten turn into a cat in this way. Suddenly, one day as she was holding the cat, I noticed that the cat was a giant, its body spilling out over and under her arms, fur everywhere. It was then that I realized how quickly the cat had grown, and I thought immediately of Dr. Loquesto's dog. “Oh, God,” I thought, “that little dog is growing, too!” Why hadn't I thought of this before? This must have been what my father meant when he yelled, “Do you think time stands still?”

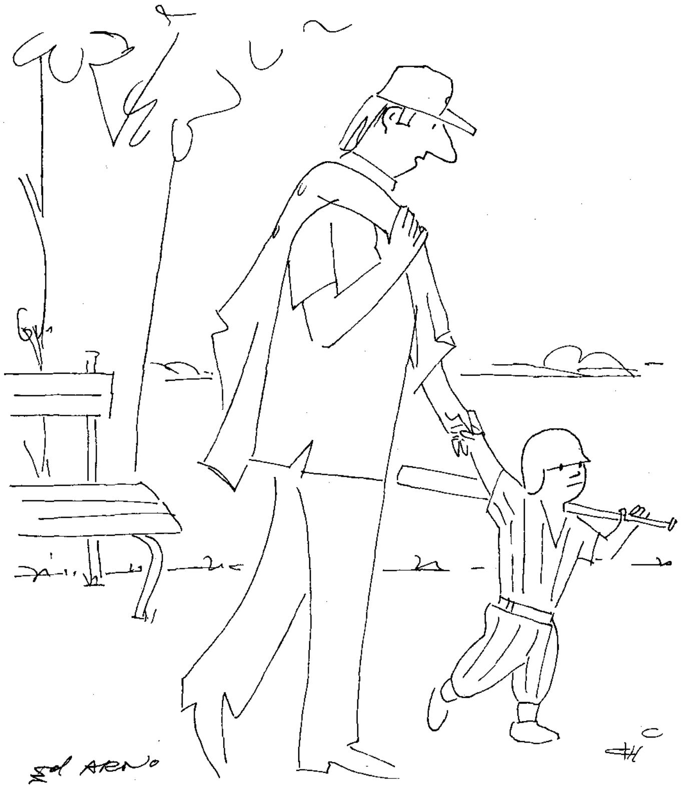
It was during the moments when Dr. Loquesto's secretaries were reading me his schedule that I re-evaluated my notions about time. They read so fast I couldn't even write the dates down. “Here . . . away . . . here . . . away . . .” And that was how the months flew by—he was here, he was away, here, away. It was March it was April it was May.

I noticed that whichever thing the doctor was doing at any moment, he was always wanting to get on to the next thing. Once, I asked him, “What's the ultimate thing you're always in such a hurry to get to?”

“Well,” he answered straightforwardly, “first we have the meeting, then we have the discussion, then we have the dinner.”

“I mean what is the ultimate goal?”

“Ultimate goal? Ultimate goal. There is no ultimate goal. I have to keep moving.”



“Yes, son, in this great country of ours anyone can grow up to make his or her own decision about long-distance phone service.”

"I'm off to lunch, Miss Heinecke. Keep her headed into the wind."

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There was no ultimate goal, after all. I had noticed this before—that those who were not going insane just kept moving. People were calm as they went about their daily rounds of wrong choices and futile pursuits. But I saw that moments could become separated from the activities that were supposed to take place during the moments. I could see a moment coming and I could feel a moment passing and I could see all the moments that had already passed. Every moment lived in the present was on its way to being the past. In this way I understood that all moments were nothing and didn't really exist.

The sunlight at certain afternoon angles showed moments to be even more dead and empty than they might have been on a cloudy day. On a cloudy day, the moments of afternoon could merge into one long moment, but on a sunny day one had to be on guard and watch what the light was doing to the time. The way the sun was shining into our garage and lighting up an old pink silk chair made it seem to me that we were already dead. My husband's woodworking projects had the look of a man's work when the man has just tragically died. The sun was lighting the front of the birdhouse he'd been shingling, and even though he was just out running and I was taking a photograph in the garden, our things had that feeling of the dead.

If you were to keep moving, I thought, just keep on moving instead of staring at the reflections and angles of sunlight, maybe you could be as happy as the surgeon.

BY the time June arrived—June, that dreaded month on the approach to the summer solstice—I had a new driver for the trip. This driver was younger than the other drivers and was not yet encumbered with a house or family or mortgage to talk about. He loved to drive, he said, no matter how long a trip I had planned. He'd be willing to drive from Southampton, where he lived, and take three ferries to New London and drive to the surgeon's hospital in southwestern Massachusetts and back, or he'd drive from Southampton and even pick me up in New York first if I was there. He'd be willing to drive me to Mt. Desert Island or Nova Scotia when I left for the real summer in search of a more northern climate.

He was so young he was from the generation of human beings who use the word "like" to mean "said." "I'm, like, 'You've got to be kidding' " was one of his expressions.

"What are these malls supposed to look like?" I'd ask him.

"That's just it," he'd answer, and he'd answer that to almost anything.

"The Expressway may be more direct," I'd say. "But there are all those trucks."

"That's just it," he'd say.

"If they're working on the Merritt and the Taconic and on I-95, how are you supposed to get to Massachusetts?"

"Exactly," he'd say. "Like I said, they don't care."

As the day approached for the important appointment, I determined from studying the weather reports on all the television channels that it was going to be one of those suddenly hot June days. Some of the more stupid weathermen would call it beautiful when a day like that burst in upon the days of normal weather we remembered from the past. Beautiful somewhere else, but not in a city; they never explained that, and there was no way to contradict them, because they didn't have an editorial reply to the weather report.

Only one weatherman loved snow and cold weather. He loved blizzards. I imagined life with this weatherman, as his wife, but he was overweight and getting bald in a peculiar way, all over his head at once, although he was just forty-two. I could tell he ate lamb chops and peas. I could tell that he was some kind of philosophical conservative. In any case, I realized I could not be married to this weatherman, but still wished we could be friends.

My new driver was overweight, too. I was shocked to meet him and see his extremely chubby face. Luckily, on long drives I did not have to see his face and think about his diet but saw only the back of his head. The new, chubby-faced driver had not figured out how to turn on the air-conditioner during his broiling three-hour drive from Southampton to New York City, and his large round face was all red. In addition to this he was wearing a sweater. At least it was cotton. “Weren't you hot?” was all I could think of asking him.

“Like I said, it wasn't too bad,” he said.

“Like I said” was one of his favorite expressions, although often he used it when it didn't apply, since he hadn't said anything yet. “Exactly,” “Like I said,” and “That's just it”—with these three expressions he didn't have to elaborate on anything.

By the time the hottest June day arrived, on the same day as the appointment for the important photograph, I knew the driver's life story and all the fun things he did in his carefree low-pressured life. “We're just going for a bite at the Golden Dragon,” he would say on the phone, and it made me wish to be going along to the Golden Dragon with them, although I knew this was a terrible restaurant, maybe the worst in Southampton.

Why did I have this day of torture ahead of me when I could have low-achievement goals, relax, and have fun the way other people did? I saw the usual ten thousand cars on the F.D.R. Drive, but for some reason they were headed south. Thousands wanted to enter New York City on this blazing-hot and humid June day. Who were they, and what were their reasons?

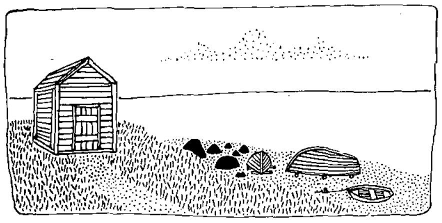
“Now are we takin' the Taconic, the Merritt, or the Interstate?” the driver was going to ask at any moment, and whichever I chose would be wrong.

I had brought along some changes of clothing. I'd wear a thin linen shirt, and if the day turned out to be one of those killer blasts of hot air, I'd change into a thinner one. I'd wear thin cotton knee-socks from Switzerland, and I could change into thinner cotton anklets from Italy. Then I'd leave my discarded clothes on the back seat in a bag while the driver drove off and waited at a friend's house in some hot suburb. My plan was to meet the surgeon at his academic office in the hospital, to take a few photographs, then go to his house and photograph him with the dog.

We weren't even across the first state line when I'd changed out of everything medium thin and into everything very thin. Why couldn't the surgeon stop working so hard in the hot weather? It was hot where he lived, near the Berkshires, but he didn't realize it yet, because in his youth, at summer camp, the Berkshires were still cool. “When is your vacation?” I asked once. “Never!” he shouted.

When I arrived at two o'clock, the surgeon was sitting at his desk, blowing his nose. “That selfish jackass doctor!” I was privileged to hear him roar in his huge academic office. “Can you believe it? He keeps statues on his air vents! He blocks the whole air system so it's freezing in my office! I have to endure freezing temperatures for years!”

“He probably doesn't have room for all his things,” I said. “He doesn't know the consequences.”



“Right—he doesn't have room for his things,” he said hatefully.

“You should be glad that they can get it so cold here. In New York they can't get it cold enough.”

“I'm not glad! I had a cold yesterday and it got worse from the cold air,” he said sullenly.

“It couldn't have gotten worse from cold air. You just felt worse.”

“That's right. That's what a cold is. You feel worse.”

“What is a cold?” I asked.

“A virus,” he said.

“If you were on a macrobiotic diet you'd never get a cold. I read in George Ohsawa's book that even one cold in ten years is a very bad thing.”

“I don't want to hear about it. Take your macrobiotic books away. I'm not interested.”

“You could eat brown rice every day.”

“Rice? I ate rice—let's see—I ate rice last week.”

Then this was the surgeon's philosophy. He'd do whatever he pleased. “ ‘You are what you eat’—Camus,” he once shouted at me. He'd ignore all the

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THE CEMETERY

The cemetery is connected to the cave
by my father's study,

its rows of collapsed graves
a card of pills—each pill
pushed through the thin foil
by a thumb.

The cemetery is two lines of double-six
dominos—it is the nostrils,
elaborately flaring, of an animal
carved by a primitive tribe.

It is the stalk
gray pieces are snapped from
to assemble a model—its stones taken
to start our town.

It is a wasp's nest—its larvae,
white-cowled in their fever,
swell from its cells as they wait
for my father to change them,

its clouds
beginning to iron the landscape flat.

Reading his notes, we quickly
pour into it a purgative
he has concocted.

Its tossed loops settle back—a soft
horseshoe of the past—onto the tops
of monuments, onto the tops of graves.

It is a lost harmonica,
its holes drifting shut,
we ream through with a pipe cleaner,

as we turn, breathing hard—
its sky now pale green.

And now the cemetery is a centrifuge—
it is a pursuit we can no longer
keep ahead of, as

trapped in its snowstorm,
unable to move on our own,
my friends and I begin
to radiate out from one another,

evenly spaced
in its glass paperweight,
and occupying the place of honor
on my father's desk.

—Alexander Thorburn

• •

medical articles about nutrition and health, articles that appeared almost weekly in the Science section of the *Times*—he'd have already ignored the original articles in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. He'd gain weight, he'd get terrible colds, he'd blow his nose and keep throwing the Kleenex into his large wastebasket, which would be overflowing with papers and boxes, and topped off with mounds of used Kleenex—and this wouldn't bother him. You knew doctors had bad health habits, right, but you didn't know that surgeons sat beside large wastebaskets of used Kleenex right in their hospital offices, and that they didn't mind that no rubber-gloved, masked hospital employees came around to empty the baskets. If I made a study of the personality of the happy-go-lucky reproductive surgeon—and the best way to do this would be to photograph him with his little dog—I would have the answer to the question how to live in the world.

Victoria Roberts

"The duck stays!"

I decided to photograph the two shady corners of the office, even though there was nothing in the corners but books and other inanimate objects. I'd put these photographs all together in a way that showed the surgeon's surroundings, and in this way the picture, so to speak, would be complete. I was surprised to see through the camera lens that I was photographing a photograph of the surgeon's parents and children. "Does this little boy still look like this?" I asked.

"You'll see when you get there," he said mysteriously.

I asked if I could photograph the clinical office. He said, "Yes, come over there with me now. Then I have a meeting at four which you can't photograph. Meet me back there at five." Then he dashed from the room.

After photographing the examining rooms in the weird fluorescent light, I went outside to buy some spring water. I walked a few minutes into the jungle heat and turned back. I could feel my light linen appearance disintegrating.

The surgeon was not at his clinical office at five o'clock, so I drank some of the warm bottled water I found in my briefcase and paced around. An overweight resident who looked like an appliance repairman appeared. At least his trousers were not slipping down. He said Dr. Loquesto was waiting in his other office. When I got there, his lab coat was thrown onto a chair and he was dressed in his real clothes—a gray suit a businessman would wear, and an ordinary striped tie. He appeared to have just combed his wavy light hair so neatly that he'd acquired a new glued-down look. This must have been what was meant in macrobiotic philosophy by "the contradictions of the universe." So intelligent, yet this hairdo.

As he led me through the blazing heat of the parking lot, I saw that he would be forced to unlock his car door so I could get in, and this would leave him with the decision whether to open the door, which would be totally against his nature, or leave it closed after unlocking it, and this would be ruder than his nature. He unlocked the door, then opened it with a kind of miserable resentment.

"Are you going to turn on the air-conditioner?" I dared to ask.

"I never use it!" he shouted.

"Even on the highway?"

"We're not going on a highway."

"But do you, on the highway?"

"Hardly ever. That's not fresh air either that you get from an air-conditioner."

"But it's cool air. You could leave the windows open and have both."

"Never!"

If only I had planned things so that my driver had picked me up and driven me to the surgeon's house and dog. But I felt I should take this chance to be driven by the ferocious doctor himself, in order to see the angle of his profile in his tiny black Ferrari. His driving style would give me information I could use, if it didn't cause the kind of accident that kills the person in the passenger seat. He'd already told me he enjoyed speeding. Maybe he would try to control himself with another person in the car.

Being trapped in that hot little car with the demonic surgeon at the wheel felt more dangerous than being conscious and operated on by him. At least during the surgery some strong sedative was dripped into my veins, preventing panic at the idea of what was going on. But in his car there was no sedation, and I knew there was no way out. I suppose I could have said, "Please let me out here," on the side of some dusty road, but that would have destroyed the semblance of the normal personality I was cultivating to help me complete my project.

Before we were even out of the city part of the town I had to adjust the sun visor. But wherever I moved it, the sun was everywhere else. The surgeon was using one of his hands to block the sun from his eyes, because he wasn't wearing sunglasses. He was going to drive into the sun, speeding for thirty minutes without sunglasses or air-conditioning. He was a madman. I tried to put my hands behind my neck and stretch my elbows out, so I could get some more air into my lungs, but there was no room for my elbows—they were going to hit the roof of the car or the edge of the surgeon's ear. Quickly I unfolded my arms and sat with my hands clenched in my lap. The doctor sped fiendishly through the gusts of hot air, and soon we were in a suburb that looked as if it had been a forest some developers had destroyed in the nineteen-sixties.

ALL of a sudden we were in his driveway and then in the hot black garage. He jumped out of the car and raced in through the door to the kitchen. But I couldn't figure out how to unlatch the seat belt, and had to sit in the tiny hot car in the dark sweltering garage and work on it. It would be a real imposition on this man's personality if I had to ask him how to unlatch the seat belt. From this trapped position I peered through the doorway into the house.

Inside the kitchen I could see there was a hot, empty silence. The doctor forced his way into the dark hot emptiness of his kitchen as if it didn't exist and yelled this normal sentence to one of his children: "Is Mom home yet?"

Into the stillness of the empty kitchen a boy came out of nowhere and said, "Not yet." Then he disappeared. Did the surgeon know that if his wife were to leave him this empty stillness and silence would be what he would come home to?

I managed to get out of the car and followed the doctor through his nineteen-fifties-style kitchen. Different boys appeared from different passageways. I guessed their ages to be from ten to fourteen. It had to be a hundred degrees in the house, but no windows were open. The boys did not seem to mind the hundred-degree temperature in their home and walked in and out of rooms as if it were sixty-eight or seventy.

The doctor sat down to read his mail.

Although I'd been in this house with these boys before, the doctor had never introduced them, and I never knew if it would be O.K. to speak to one or two of them.

"What's it like out on that porch?" I finally asked a boy who appeared to be about ten. "Is it any cooler?"

"You can try, but it's hot there, too," he said.

So they all just sat in their hot kitchen and never even ventured onto their porch, which was so rarely used that it was locked. There was no porch furniture anywhere. As I opened the storm door, I saw that the little boy was right. It was just as hot, but the air was not as old as the air in the house.

Only the dog seemed to mind any of this. He was lying exhausted in a corner of the kitchen floor. Because of the day's weather and the surgeon's behavior, I had almost forgotten the purpose of my trip. I had to look at the dog and assess his development. The outline of the dog on the floor seemed to be two inches larger than it had been a few months before. Maybe he had gained a pound, but he was the same grayish color as the linoleum, so it wasn't clear what was the dog and what was the floor. Surely the doctor's wife would come home and throw open the windows in a fit of common sense. Then the dog might jump up. This was all I could hope for—and that she would come home soon.

Obviously the surgeon was the kind of man who never opened a window or tightened a screw in his life. If he had, then just on principle he'd never do it in his own home, I could tell. He was used to having things done for him, and like the upper classes in the Arab world, as I'd once heard, he found menial labor beneath him, although he was not any part Arab. But he might as well have been an Arab, since he had his own set of rules for behavior which no one understood. There are experts to explain the behavior and customs of the Arab world. For example, I'd heard that it's an insult to an Arab to show the sole of the foot when one is wading across a river. But the surgeon's hospital and medical school did not have an expert to explain his behavior or how to act in his presence. In the same day, one doctor told me, "He has a good heart," and another said, "He has no heart."

This has to be the most unpleasant project I've ever gotten myself into, I thought as I tried to make my way back through the thick, heavy airlessness of the kitchen. The doctor was still sitting at the table. A view of the kitchen cabinets would be his only view if he chose to look up while reading his mail. But he chose not to look up. He methodically went through his mail, dispensing with this or that piece and yelling "All right!" and "O.K.!" every minute or two. I don't even open my mail. I thought about my unopened mail as I watched the surgeon.

There were many things I could learn about from the doctor, other than the subject of his expertise, reproductive surgery—which he refused to talk about even when, or *especially* when, I was his patient. His rule was always to use one word as an explanation when ten words were necessary. A grunt of agreement was

"Well, then, how about a no-load mutual fund?"

preferable to a whole word, and his favorite word was "No!" shouted as loud as he could, or "Wrong!" shouted equally loud. If you were wrong in your surmising something you had to surmise when he refused to give an explanation, sometimes he liked to say "Yes," pretending to agree. When he said "Yes" this way his face did not have the expression that went with the word. I had never seen this look on the face of a human, but thought I remembered it on the face of an animal Julia Child was about to do something to. So much must have been going on in the man's brain that the only look he could get into his eyes was the look of an animal that had been dead and refrigerated for several days and now lay on a marble countertop. He had mastered this trick in his battle against communication.

I once asked him, "How did you survive the feminist era?" and he said, "Huh? Survive? Whaddya mean, survive? I'm a supporter of women, I'm very good to women. In this profession . . . I help women training to be in this profession."

"You help women the way people help dogs they're training to do tricks," I said.

"That's help. What's wrong with that?" he said.

As the surgeon proceeded with the reading of his mail, his four sons and their two friends wandered in and out of the kitchen and glanced at him. I had not yet figured out which were the sons and which were the friends, because they all looked similar except for the youngest boy. Maybe because of the heat they had no energy to act like boys, or because they looked alike the older ones all seemed to be the same boy. Just kind of five boys melded into one; the heat and the sticky conditions blurred the lines of distinction among them, the way the tigers in "Little Black Sambo" all ran around so fast that they melted. These boys had melted into a kind of innocuous pancake batter and poured in and out through the doorways into the kitchen from time to time. This had to be the greenhouse effect getting under way.

The little boy and his brothers, when glancing at the surgeon at work on his mail, would smile the way people smile at the antics of a comedian they like to watch. Yet he was engrossed in his tedious chore and was oblivious of what went on around him. He never asked to have a window opened or to have a fan turned on. I didn't see any fans. He didn't have a glass of iced tea. And then he shouted, "O.K.!" and jumped up from the table. "I'm going to watch the news," he yelled.

"After the news, do you think you might be ready for the photograph?" I asked.

"We'll see. First do the dog. One thing at a time," he said. Then he disappeared into the television-watching room.

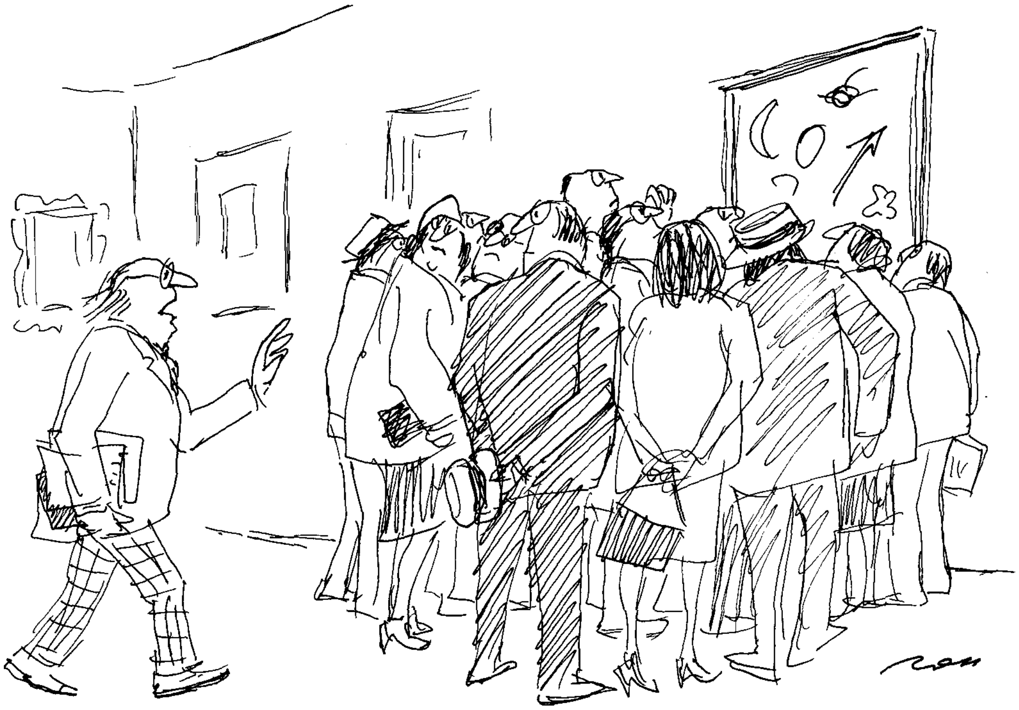
I ASKED the youngest boy if we could go outside. He took the dog's leash and attached it to the dog's collar and opened the front door.

It was the hour of the day when mosquitoes like to come out, although the sun was not making any progress in going down. Every time I looked at the sky and at my watch, that monster was still up there. It was maybe an eighth of an inch lower. I knew that when the sun finally moved down, the residual heat was going to hang about this suburb even after dark. And after walking around the wooded area that was the backyard, searching for a site for a photograph of the dog, I realized that I probably didn't have the best lens for the dim light that was descending upon the woods. Mosquitoes were buzzing around the boy and seemed to be taking bites out of his arms every few seconds.

"Are there ticks around here?" I asked.

"We have a high rate of Lyme disease," he said matter-of-factly. I showed him a suspicious rash on my ankle but he wasn't impressed. I could tell that nothing would impress this boy.

He led me back to the house, which seemed to have got even hotter. Does prolonged exposure to heat and humidity affect perception, I wondered, as I stood in front of the TV room. There was the surgeon, lying in a semi-prone position, leaning on his hand, watching the news in color on a big TV screen. There were several TV screens in the room, all giant-sized. They were all on the same channel, and the colors of the newscasters—their wardrobes and their faces and their hair and the maps behind them—were all orange and turquoise and bright pink. The room didn't seem to be a real room, with all that glass of the TV screens around, and in the fluorescent glare of these colors it seemed to be more of a



"Let me through! I'm a critic."

• •

TWO PRAYERS

I

Rigid as a tuning fork
before it's struck, I can hardly bear
a sideways glance. Yes, good, it's there—
the ground's still there, and we're still on it.
In another minute,

the whole world will reverberate:
a drumming beneath the feet, a racket
in overhead storage (somebody's jacket
free-falls, a knotted parachute);
impassively, a swaying, mute

stewardess models an oxygen mask.
Why not escape this death-berth now?
Storm up the stifling aisle, smash a window . . .
Paralyzed by one shaming thought
(it wouldn't be polite),

I resolve, instead, to die.
But what kind of mother am I, to allow
my girls off Mother Earth? How
had I dared to hope their innocence
sufficed as a defense

against our common destination?
Lord, if you'll save them just this once,
I promise . . . Relax. A celestial voice
is answering, "Ladies and gentlemen,
in a moment we'll begin

our lunging service."
What? Oh, luncheon. By which they mean
a flying saucer of coffee, a wan
food substitute or two, while the pilot
takes three hundred souls on his plate.

II

Where is he, anyway? Another
voice floats over; something's wrong
in her breezy, cornball "cruisin' along
at thirty-five thousand feet," although
it sounds like they always—No,

our captain couldn't be a *woman*?
A rush of vicarious pride, then fear
(sickening, since I shouldn't care—
like any man, she must be skilled
enough to get us killed)

modulates to a surge of courage:
am I not the captain of my life?
Somebody's mother, somebody's wife—
think of women down there scrubbing floors.
Instead, our pilot soars

scientifically into the clean
convergence of cloud and sun, Our Father
in Heaven merely "a bit of weather"
to bump through on a working day.
Man was not born to fly,

nor woman; but wouldn't it be fine
if, overreaching angels who all
too soon will undergo our fall,
we'd learn, at least, to be brave? Buckled
in, my daughters sleep; white-knuckled

clouds cast shadows on their faces.
May they never know an hour of terror,
land on their feet, and shrug off error;
may they rise, as now, above the clutter
of rooftops, like mind over matter.

—Mary Jo Salter

• •

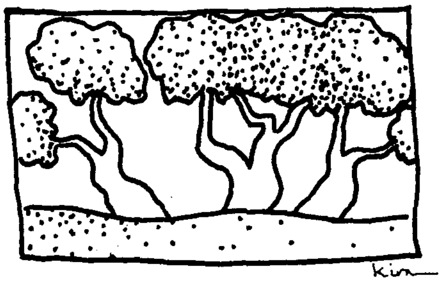
giant aquarium—only the air bubbles were missing—and the semi-prone surgeon floating above the upholstered rocky cove had no resemblance to a human being but appeared to be some large underwater creature, like a dolphin. I felt that I was watching a rare specimen in its captive habitat. The colors of everything in the room somehow seemed to have joined the colors of the television screens and were all moving around the dolphinlike doctor in waves.

He looked up at us in the doorway, and I noticed that his glasses were the same style as the ones they put on dolphins in advertisements for real aquariums—in Mystic, Connecticut, and some place in Florida—which are always being criticized for exploiting dolphins for their good nature and high intelligence. I knew that even in the same glasses the doctor was not as good-natured as a dolphin and less communicative, too.

I ventured to ask him, in his transformed state, "Do you want to see the tape I brought of Michio Kushi talking about grains?"

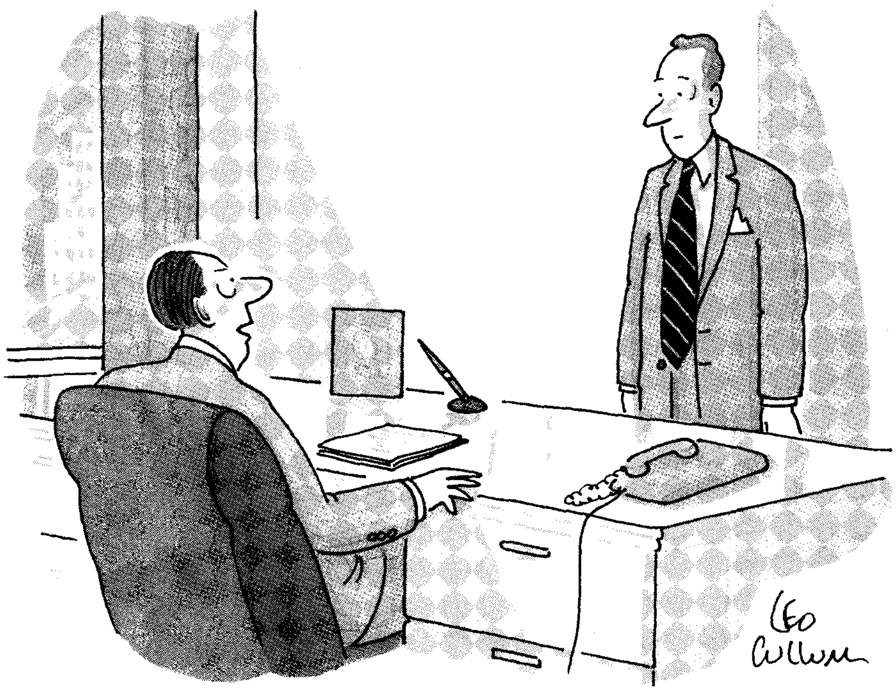
"No," he said. "I'm watching the news."

"Oh," I said as I backed out of the doorway to the aquarium. "O.K."



The youngest boy was heading toward the kitchen. He was supposed to put a casserole in the oven, but he didn't know what the right temperature was. The other boys guessed several temperatures, all of which I knew to be too high. Although it was not my place, I thought I could suggest the temperature. "Two fifty is high enough," I said.

I saw that the thing being heated wasn't anything human beings should eat but something like meat loaf, and I was participating in its heating up. I supposed the surgeon had eaten meat before operating on me when I was his patient, but what could I do about that? I supposed that meat eating went on in every segment of society including the segment of health-care and medical professionals, but it would be best not to think about this now. The boy was putting on some red-and-white polka-dotted pot-holder mitts, without any understanding of how they looked. He looked at them seriously as he put them on his small hands, as if skill and precision were necessary to put on these simple mitts. I hoped this little boy would not be following in his father's footsteps. I hoped he would be some kind of chef instead of some kind of doctor. Time did not stand still. This boy was going to grow up along with his dog. Probably he'd have another dog before he went to college. He might go to medical school, though I hoped not, and his mother probably hoped not, too. The boy would grow up, and this day nearing the summer solstice, this year just past the prime of my life, would be only a memory to him. "This photographer once came to take a picture of my father and our dog. Boy, was she weird!" That could be the whole thing.



"We've decided, Carmichael, to give you back to the community."

• •

SUDDENLY the surgeon appeared out of nowhere. He seemed to have crawled through a tunnel to the kitchen like a mole or a groundhog to get some food. Because first he was in the aquarium and then he was up on his feet in his kitchen ready for food.

"Did you get a picture of the dog? I wasn't in the mood to have my picture taken before," the doctor said.

"The light wasn't right for the dog," I said.

A jar of something called Butter Buds appeared on the table.

"I've never seen this product in real life," I said.

"What's wrong with it?" the doctor asked.

"The ingredients. All fake."

"Good, good. We love that kind of thing," he said.

Soon the doctor and the boys were eating this hot meal in their muggy kitchen and I was gathering up my photography equipment.

"Did you ask Mizzzz Wisch if she'd like a plate of string beans?" the doctor asked the youngest boy. "Do you know you have to call her Mizzzz?"

"Can't he call me by my first name? I'm not a librarian in 1954."

"Then you'd be Miss. Or you'd have to be Mrs.! Ha!" the doctor shouted.

"Do you want any string beans?" the boy asked.

"Maybe she wants something to drink," the doctor said to the boy.

"How about something like Perrier?" I asked.

"We only drink soda. Diet soda," the doctor said.

"I have some water in my briefcase. You know, in my childhood my father forbade any soda products in our home."

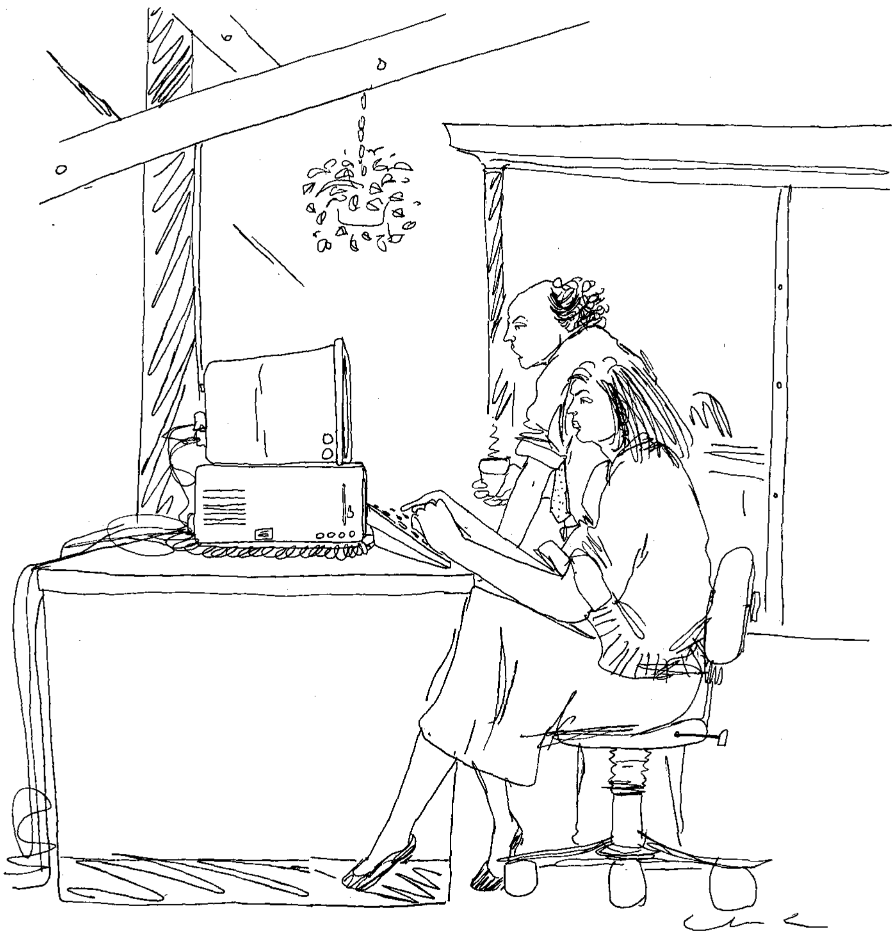
"Why?" the boy asked. From my position in the living room I heard the doctor muttering "It figures" and "No wonder" while I was digging around for my bottle of water.

This room seemed even hotter than the kitchen. I was forced to catch a glimpse of myself in a large gold-framed mirror. My light-pink linen shirt was creased all over, and there was a line of dark-blue ink down the front. I didn't care whether it would ever come out at that point. Because I saw no future beyond this second for myself in the shirt—I saw only this one moment of ruin. Obviously, I should not go out into the world. I should stay with flowers in gardens. My socks had rolled down around my ankles, and my pleated linen skirt had unpleated. Long pieces of my hair were going every which way, like some caramel spun-sugar decoration I saw Martha Stewart demonstrate on David Letterman's show while he paid no attention and tried to make fun of her.

As I took a sip of my tepid water, I heard the doctor say with relief, "It's Mom!" A few times during his dinner I had heard him say, "Mom must be having a good time in New York," as he looked sadly at the door he hoped she would walk through shortly.

The surgeon's wife had come home, although she could have run away for good. Not only had she spent the whole day in New York City, but now she was smiling at everyone. She had the beautiful permanent smile of a doll I had saved in its original box since I was five. Maybe she was just kind of shell-shocked from her years of living with the surgeon's personality. It had to be a shell-shocked smile, or the smile of the wives in "The Stepford Wives." These wives, I recalled, had the rebellious part of their brains destroyed in order to make them the perfect domestic creatures men wanted them to be.

The whole family cheered up when she came home. How lucky the doctor was to have this wife! She looked as if it were a bright new morning with clear blue skies and no humidity. She was wearing elegant, grownup clothing—a white silk shirt with long sleeves that were not wrinkled or rolled up. She was wearing a triple strand of pearls, though women who owned such pearls told me they never



“*Incredible, but is it billable?*”

wore them in hot weather, because they’d cling in their hot, pearl-like way to their necks. She wore a suit—the skirt was the narrow kind you can’t walk in, but she said, “We walked all over Madison Avenue.” She wore stockings and high-heeled shoes, and in these things she had walked all over the place I was always trying to leave. She wore some gold bracelets I couldn’t identify, but I knew they were a really good kind, in demand by women of the Upper East Side. Instead of running upstairs to tear off these things, she sat down and began to tell about her day in New York. Although we’re about the same age, she looked twenty-seven or nineteen.

“You mean you walked all around Madison Avenue in high heels?” I said.

“I’m used to high heels for work,” she said, smiling. “I love to go to New York and walk around.”

“Even in June?” I said. “Everyone I know wants to leave.”

“You live there. That’s why.” She smiled again.

“We all hate it,” I said, speaking for the entire city.

“Hot weather doesn’t bother me. Was it hot here? I did take my jacket off,” she said, smiling her radiant smile.

“You drove yourself all that way on the highway?” I said.

“I always do. There was traffic this morning, but it wasn’t too bad.”

“We must have passed each other on the Drive,” I said.

“Maybe,” she said, smiling again. “Didn’t you have anything to eat?” she asked me with a look of concern.

“She doesn’t eat anything we have,” the doctor said.

“We have apples. Would you like an apple?”

“I ate a peach this afternoon,” I said.

“It’s some macrobiotic thing,” the doctor said.

“Not to eat more than one fruit a day,” I explained. “Only three a week, I think.”

“Why?” she asked.

“Too yin,” I said.

“What’s that?” the boy asked.

“Yin and yang,” the doctor said with disdain.

“For example, he’s too yang,” I said, “and I’m too yin.”

“She only eats brown rice and seaweed,” the doctor explained.

“It’s too hot to eat anyway,” I said, going back to the living room.

I knew I had to remove myself from the midst of this happy, normal family, normal even with the surgeon as a part of it. My film was on their dining-room table with some contact sheets. I didn’t want to get these things mixed up with their chandeliers and vases. I decided I’d come back for the major photograph in October, if it cooled off. I had to hope the dog was not due for a big growth spurt.

I could still hear the doctor’s doll-faced wife talking about her day in those high heels. “We had lunch at the museum, and then we looked at Oriental rugs,” she said.

If only they were cotton rugs! I thought. If she would just take off her jewelry and change her shoes. But she was sitting there the way ambassadors’ wives are trained to sit and seem comfortable at teas and receptions.

The surgeon was kind of listening. I guessed he was so happy she had returned that he tried to seem interested.

“Really, we had a lovely day,” she was saying again. “Just a lovely day.” And I saw that she was smiling again. And I had to wonder exactly what did she mean. In what way was it lovely? I knew I’d have to discuss it with my driver.

“ALL the windows were closed,” I told him. “No one minded.”

“Where I was, too. They said, ‘It will be hotter if you open them’!”

“What?”

“I know! I’m like, ‘It will?’”

“*But we live near the ocean.* It’s different. These unfortunate people live inland.”

“That’s just it. At least did you get your photo?”

“No, the doctor had a cold and the dog was too hot. But what do you think she meant by ‘lovely’?”

“You know, I don’t know.”

“How could it be a lovely day? What does she mean?” —JULIE HECHT

ANNALS OF GOVERNMENT

SERVING THE PRESIDENT

THE VIETNAM YEARS—II

THE year 1968 was one of those rare years which shape our lives, a year that historians will reëxamine and reinterpret for generations to come. It was the most difficult year of my life, a year of partial success and ultimate frustration. My secretary for more than five decades, Mary Weiler, later said to me, "That was a year that lasted five years. I thought it was going to kill you." But of course she did not tell me that at the time.

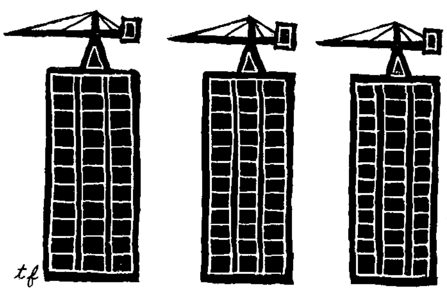
Less than three weeks into the new year, President Lyndon Johnson nominated me to be Secretary of Defense. Four days later, the North Koreans seized an American intelligence ship, the Pueblo, in international waters. A week after that, on the day I was confirmed by the Senate, the Communists fought their way into the American Embassy compound in Saigon to start the Tet offensive. The rest of the year kept pace with that dizzying start.

In late November, 1967, my name had been listed in a number of newspapers as one of several possible successors to Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara. When the President needled me about the publicity, I assured him that I was not a candidate for the position. He laughed, giving no indication that I was under serious consideration. But Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, a confidant of the President, told me I was on Johnson's short list. "Lyndon has got me serving my country, and now it's your turn," he said to me, only half joking. Ironically, by the summer of 1968 I would be fighting hard to save his doomed nomination as Chief Justice of the United States.

Though I remained ambivalent about serving under Lyndon Johnson, the position of Secretary of Defense had an undeniable attraction for me. National security and foreign policy had always interested me more than domestic issues. Vietnam was unquestionably the most difficult and important issue that had confronted the nation since the Korean War, and I liked the idea of the challenge. And there was a certain personal logic in my heading the Defense Department, since I had participated in its creation while serving as special counsel to President Harry Truman.

As the new year began, I worked with the President and his staff on the drafting of the 1968 State of the Union Message. On January 18th, the day after the speech, the President asked to see me. It had been almost two months since McNamara's departure was announced, and there had been no movement toward naming a successor. We met shortly after 7 P.M. "In the past, you've always said your interest was foreign policy and national security," the President said. "Now I've got exactly the right place for you—Secretary of Defense. It will suit you, and you cannot possibly have any objection to it."

I knew that this time I could not refuse his request, nor did I wish to do so. I thanked him, and we shook hands. He told me not to tell anyone except Marny, my wife, until he had had a chance to discuss it with Secretary of State Dean Rusk, McNamara, and congressional leaders, over the next few days. The next morning, the President called shortly before eleven o'clock to say that McNamara, who was at that moment in the Oval Office, was "on board and delighted," and that he intended to make the announcement that very day, before there were any leaks. Could I come over immediately to prepare for it? It was my return to the government after eighteen years—I had served President Truman first as naval aide and then as special counsel—and it should have been preceded by some reflection on what lay ahead. But in the real world there is rarely time for such introspection. Now, as I rushed back to the White House for the announcement, practical questions imposed themselves, demanding immediate attention. What was I to do about detaching myself from my law firm? Were there any conflicts of interest? Which congressional leaders should be notified in advance? Friends? Future associates? How does one prepare for the confirmation hearings? What about security checks?



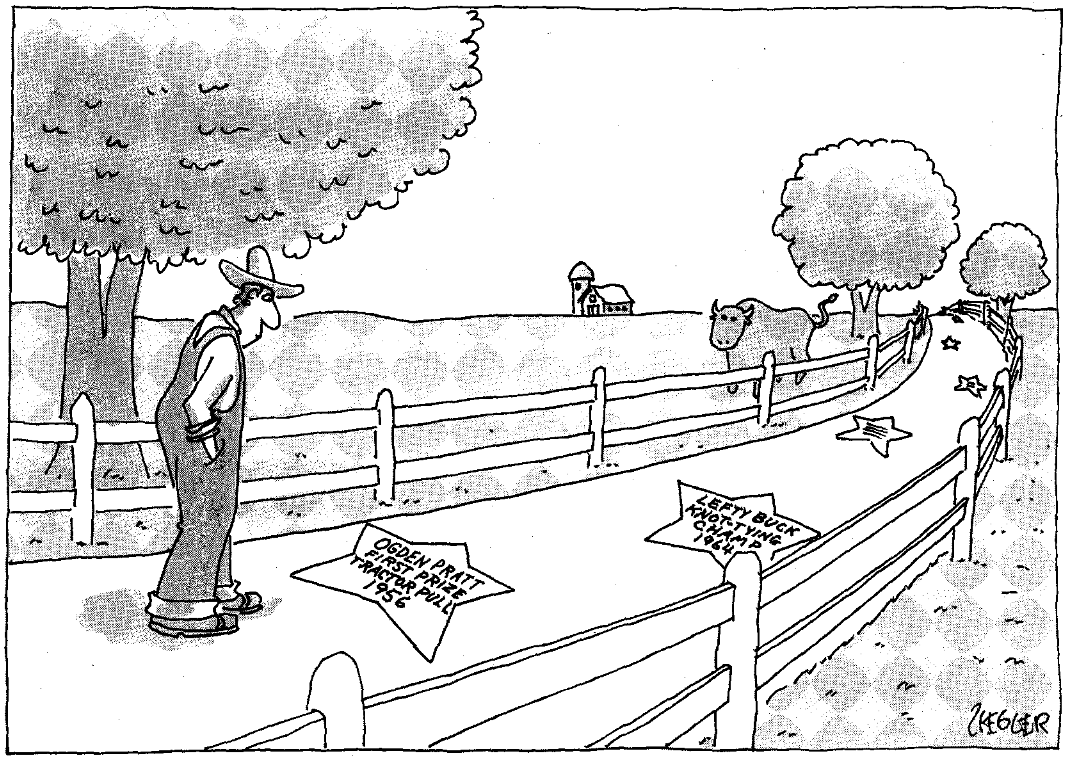
McNamara was waiting for me in the Cabinet Room with warm and generous congratulations. He urged me to ask Paul Nitze to stay on as Deputy Secretary of Defense—a post Nitze had taken after serving for three and a half years as Secretary of the Navy—and said that this would be the most effective way to assure an easy transition. He cautioned me, however, that Nitze had hoped for the top job himself and believed that he had been passed over for top positions by several Presidents, including both John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. I had known Paul Nitze since the Truman Administration, and respected his abilities in the defense field. If he was willing to swallow his disappointment, I saw no reason not to accept McNamara's recommendation. From that moment on, McNamara and I worked as a team until, having completed the 1969 defense budget, he left the Pentagon, at the end of February.

President Johnson made the announcement to the press in the Oval Office at three-thirty in the afternoon of January 19th. Later that afternoon, I faced the White House press corps. Asked if I was a hawk or a dove, I replied:

> I am not conscious of falling under any of those ornithological divisions. I think you would have plenty of opportunity to reach some conclusions if the Senate confirms me and if I am in office for a while.

Another question concerned my law practice: How would I handle my law clients and "any private interests"? Having anticipated this, I deliberately went further than the question required:

> One, I will sever all connections with my law firm so that there will be no remaining association of any kind. . . . Two, I will dispose of any asset, any stock,



WALK OF THE STARS: JASPERVILLE, ILLINOIS

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> or any security that would in any way interfere with my complete objective judgment in the conduct of the new post. I will have one client from now on—if confirmed—and that client will be the United States.

While I had tried to resist categorization, many articles at the time described me as a hawk. The *Times* struck a particularly sour note in an editorial, saying, "President Johnson has replaced a brilliant doubter with a competent confidante. The choice of Mr. Clifford seems particularly uninspiring in the shadow of his predecessor."

Probably the most perceptive comment came from the Boston *Globe*, which wrote:

> Speculation as to the secretary-designate's hawkishness or doveishness is as pointless as it is confused. His friends have known him as a behind-the-scenes hawk and bombing advocate—up to now. But these friends are familiar, also, with his skilled lawyer's way of saying nothing intelligible where there is nothing to be gained.... Mr. Clifford's counsel to his close friend of two decades will be persuasive. What it will be will depend entirely on what he senses as he takes the nation's pulse.

Given all this speculation, what did Lyndon Johnson think my position on Vietnam was when he selected me as his new Secretary of Defense? And, in the light of the drama about to unfold, what was my position on Vietnam on *the day I was named?*

I have been asked these questions more than any others in the twenty-two years since I left the Pentagon. The answers are quite simple. The President wanted a Secretary of Defense who supported his policy, who could end the struggle between the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and who could improve relations with Congress. On January 19, 1968, I fitted that job description. The President remembered my initial opposition to the buildup, in 1965, of course, but after that decision was made I had been a consistent supporter of his policy in Vietnam. If at the time of my appointment I had held the views that I was to develop only a few weeks later, I would have had an obligation to inform President Johnson, and he might then have chosen someone else for the position.

ON January 23rd, four days after my nomination, the President invited me for the first time to the Tuesday Lunch—the weekly "principals only" meeting with his senior national-security officials. It was a memorable harbinger of things to come, and began what was to be the most intense ten weeks of my life. On that day, the President and his advisers faced four major problems, ranging from very serious to crisis proportions. Normally, any one of them would have demanded full attention from the National Security Council, but these were not normal times. "Clark, this is what it is like on a typical day," McNamara joked as we began to go over the agenda:

1. The United States Army had made a serious, inadvertent intrusion into Cambodia during a fierce firefight along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. This violation of Cambodian neutrality, at a time when it was still important to us, would require both a public apology to Prince Norodom Sihanouk from Secretary Rusk and tense internal discussions with General William C. Westmoreland, the American military commander in Vietnam, in order to prevent a recurrence.

2. A B-52 carrying nuclear weapons had crashed seven miles short of the runway at an American airbase near Thule, Greenland. A special search team, including nuclear-weapons experts, was rushing to the scene. The *question of what to say publicly was* particularly delicate, because Denmark had a special sensitivity concerning anything related to nuclear weapons.

3. The largest battle of the Vietnam War seemed about to begin at Khe Sanh, in the far northwestern corner of South Vietnam, where six thousand seven hundred American marines and South Vietnamese Rangers were surrounded and, *for the first time in the* war, outnumbered by the enemy. By the time of that first Tuesday Lunch, President Johnson had become obsessed by Khe Sanh, and had even set up a sand-table map and photographic murals of Khe Sanh in the basement of the White House so that he could follow personally every detail of the siege.

4. Finally, there had been a major disaster in the North Pacific: a few hours earlier the Pueblo had

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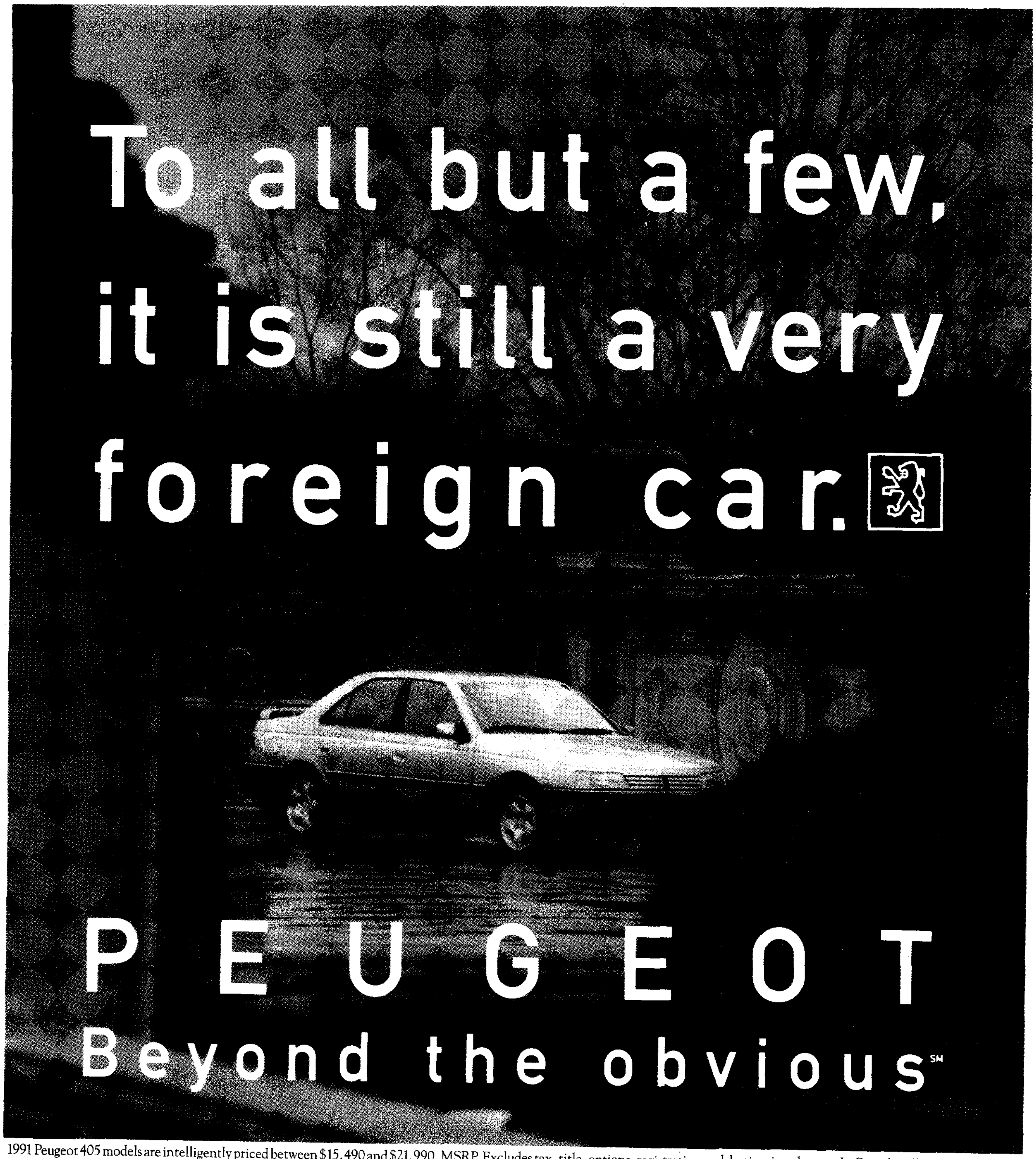

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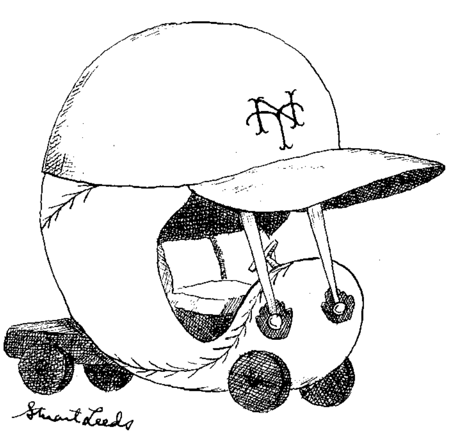
been boarded by North Koreans and forced to proceed to the port of Wonsan with its eighty-three-man crew, one of whom was killed in the attack. Through a failure in Pentagon planning, there were no American planes or other naval vessels near enough to the Pueblo on January 23rd to rescue it before it could reach Wonsan.

To President Johnson, the seizure of the Pueblo was almost too much to bear. At first, he was convinced that it was part of a worldwide challenge to him and to the nation—a coördinated Communist plan to smash our will and stretch our resources to the breaking point. Wearily, he said that he expected the next blow to fall in Berlin.

The fear that the Pueblo was part of a worldwide crisis proved to be unfounded; the Pueblo seizure was simply part of the continuing brutality of North Korea—then, as now, one of the world's most isolated and dangerous regimes. But the effort to get the crew back continued almost to the last day of my tenure at the Defense Department. We rejected retaliation, because it would not have advanced our overriding objective: freeing the officers and crew without subjecting them to an even greater risk of being killed. Eventually, negotiations with the North Koreans began at Panmunjom in February. These talks started in an atmosphere of bitter North Korean propaganda and harsh, coercive treatment of the crew of the Pueblo, some of whom had signed letters of "confession" stating that their ship had violated North Korean waters on a spy mission. Aware that the confessions had been obtained under duress, I reacted with pride when a photograph of some of the crew that was sent around the world by the North Koreans showed half of the men in the photograph with their middle fingers discreetly but unmistakably extended, in a gesture whose meaning, familiar to all Americans, had escaped North Korean notice.

The Pueblo negotiations continued for the rest of the year, under the direction of Paul Nitze and Richard Steadman, the very able Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, who had accompanied me the previous summer on a trip I had made with General Maxwell Taylor, our former Ambassador to South Vietnam, to get additional troop commitments from America's Pacific allies. Together with the State Department, Nitze and Steadman devised one of the strangest solutions to a hostage crisis ever witnessed. The North Koreans had demanded an American admission of guilt; we finally told them that in return for the release of the crew the United States would sign a "confession," but would repudiate it as a complete fabrication at the very moment we signed it. The North Koreans accepted our offer, presumably because they could control their own media completely and wanted to be rid of the problem. Accordingly, in December, 1968, our negotiator signed a document and simultaneously told the North Koreans, "We would not apologize for actions which we did not believe took place . . . I will sign the document to free the crew and only to free the crew." The North Koreans released the entire crew of the Pueblo on December 23, 1968, eleven months after the men were taken. The ship was never returned.

DESPITE the seizing of the Pueblo, the President continued to focus his attention on "his" marines at Khe Sanh. Haunted by the memory of the French defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu, in 1954, he wanted reassurance that the marines could hold Khe Sanh. McNamara and General Earle Wheeler, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told him that the marines were ready for anything the North Vietnamese could throw at them. At my first Tuesday Lunch, the President read aloud part of a telegram from General Westmoreland describing developments in other regions of Vietnam. Westmoreland said he expected some "terrorism" in the Saigon area soon. "The enemy is presently developing a threatening posture in several areas in order to seek victories essential to achieving prestige and bargaining power," he wrote. "He may exercise his initiatives prior to, during, or after Tet."



This telegram would later become an important part of a dispute that has continued ever since 1968 about whether or not the military in Vietnam anticipated, and were prepared for, the nationwide Communist offensive that started within a few days—on January 30th, on the eve of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. Later, Westmoreland said he had predicted the offensive, and supported his claim with several public and private warnings he had made, among them the telegram the President read to us on January 23rd. President Johnson, in his memoirs, says that he saw the Tet offensive coming as early as the previous fall and warned many people about it, including the Australian government, during a trip to Canberra on December 21st.

There is a kernel of truth in such statements, but they are highly misleading. At the very last minute, General Westmoreland began to cancel leave plans for Tet and alerted his troops that something big might be under way. By that time, the evidence was overwhelming. But even then he did not anticipate the size and scope of the offensive. When I examined this question after becoming Secretary of Defense, I concluded that Westmoreland's earlier warnings of attacks "prior to, during, or after" Tet were part of the normal flow of intelligence messages from Saigon. Both President Johnson and Westmoreland had seen reports warning of the possibility of a large enemy offensive in early 1968, but neither they nor anyone else in the American intelligence community predicted or foresaw anything approaching the extraordinary size and scope of the Tet offensive. An increase in enemy activity around Tet, yes, but not a large-scale offensive that could change the face of the war. The claim that the Administration and General Westmoreland had predicted the Tet offensive and that the prediction had been ignored by the press saddens me; it is self-evident that if anything resembling what actually happened had been anticipated the behavior and the statements of most of the senior officials in the United States government in the months preceding January 30, 1968, would have been very different, and

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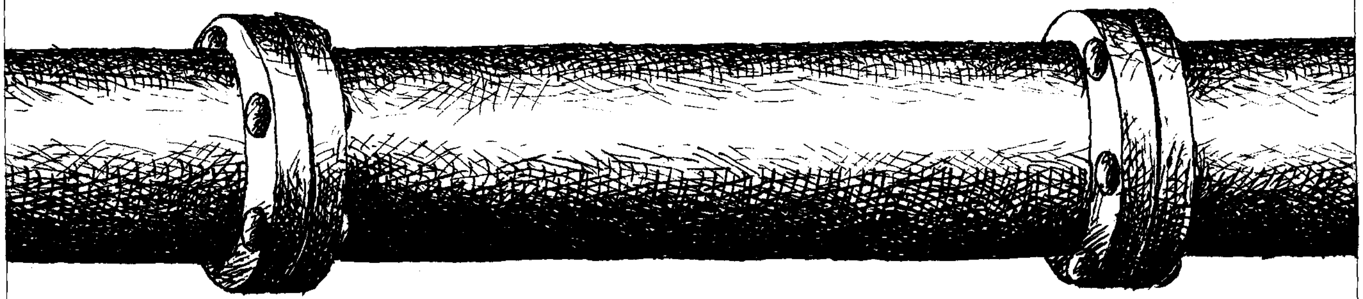

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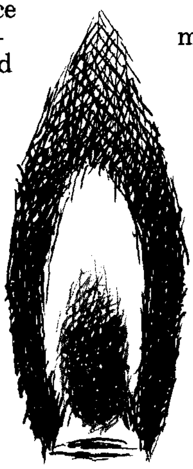

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Khe Sanh would not have become an obsession.

The fact is that in the three months before the offensive both Westmoreland and Ellsworth Bunker, who had succeeded Henry Cabot Lodge as American Ambassador to South Vietnam in April of 1967, loudly proclaimed that enemy strength was decreasing. In the fall of 1967, they sent Washington a series of long and forceful telegrams designed to demonstrate that "we are making solid progress and are not in a stalemate." These telegrams contained not one word of warning about the possibility of large-scale, coördinated Communist attacks in the future. On the contrary, they made proud assertions, such as the following—assertions that must rank among the most erroneous assessments ever sent by field commanders:

> Friendly forces have seized the military initiative from the enemy. . . . He has been prevented from employing his primary strategy of mounting large scale offensives because of steadily improving friendly military strength.

By the beginning of 1968, Westmoreland and Wheeler had decided that the major battle of the war was indeed about to take place. But they were certain it would come at Khe Sanh. In late January, the President, Secretary Rusk, Walt W. Rostow, who had succeeded McGeorge Bundy as the President's national-security assistant, McNamara, and I met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff for three consecutive days at the White House to review the siege at Khe Sanh. General Wheeler told the President that "the most vicious battle of the Vietnam War" was about to begin there. On January 29th, the President met with all five Joint Chiefs of Staff solely to ask whether, in his words, "everything has been done to assure that General Westmoreland can take care of the expected enemy offensive against Khe Sanh." The Chiefs said that the marines would be able to handle any Communist assault. Their prediction about the marines proved to be correct, but at no time in those meetings did anyone suggest that the battle in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam might be part of a master Communist strategy designed to divert American attention and resources from an offensive elsewhere. Yet only a few days later the full fury of the Tet offensive descended on most of South Vietnam; as it turned out, Khe Sanh was primarily a diversion, drawing many of our best troops to the remote highlands before the Communists attacked the populated areas of South Vietnam.

I never doubted General Westmoreland's sincerity, but I cannot agree with his conclusion, written after the war, that his only real failure at Tet was in not "preparing the American people for it," so that "the offensive seemed to many in direct contradiction to President Johnson's campaign to demonstrate progress in the war." General Wheeler was more candid when he told a military historian in 1970:

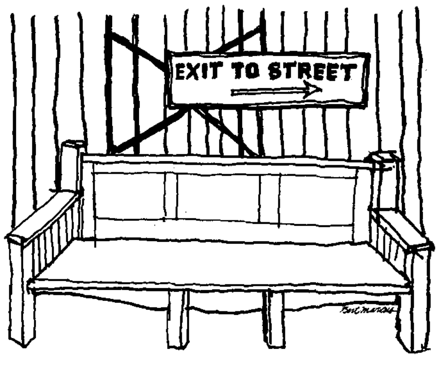
> I would say that no one really expected the enemy to launch the attack during Tet. . . . While we knew something was going to happen, we didn't know exactly when, nor did we know how extensive the attack was going to be.

After studying the offensive, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board told the President that it represented a serious failure of military intelligence. An assessment that was prepared at West Point in 1969 and has been used there since in the study of Vietnam expresses my view succinctly:

> The first thing to understand about [General V. Nguyen] Giap's Tet offensive is that it was an allied intelligence failure ranking with Pearl Harbor in 1941 or the Ardennes offensive in 1944.

As the world seemed to spiral out of control, I still had to deal with my confirmation hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee. These would have been a routine affair except for one important exchange with Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, which led to my first disagreement with my new colleagues in the State Department and the White House.

The trouble centered on our conditions for stopping the bombing of North Vietnam. A speech that the President had made at San Antonio in September, 1967, in which he proposed a halt to the bombing if North Vietnam would enter into negotiations, was originally designed to reïnforce the negotiating effort being conducted through Henry Kissinger, then a professor at Harvard, who had private contacts with two European academics, one of whom had known President Ho Chi Minh for more than twenty years. But even when that channel dried up, the American position remained as President Johnson had stated it in San Antonio:



> The heart of the matter is really this: The United States is willing to stop all aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam when this will lead promptly to productive discussions. We, of course, assume that while discussions proceed, North Vietnam would not take advantage of this bombing cessation or limitation.

By the time my nomination went up for confirmation, I thought that those fifty-one words had been as much discussed, analyzed, and interpreted as the Bible or the works of Shakespeare. Dean Rusk viewed the San Antonio formula as "deliberately vague." But no formal discussions had been held within the executive branch on the precise meaning of the formula before my hearings, which began shortly after 10:30 A.M. on January 25th, in the Old Senate Office Building.

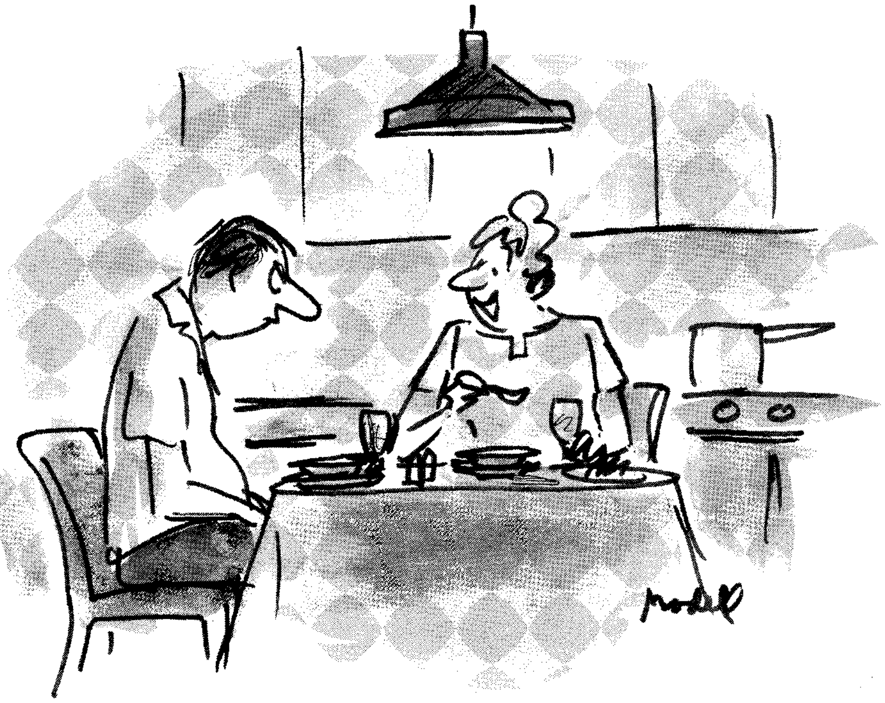
Just before noon, Senator Thurmond, the second-ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee, began his round of questioning. In public comments before the hearings, Thurmond had been the only member of the committee to voice open hostility toward me. The questioning included this exchange:

> Senator Thurmond: When you spoke of negotiating, in which case you would be willing to have a cessation of bombing, I presume you would contemplate that they would stop their military activities, too, in return for a cessation of bombing.
>
> Mr. Clifford: No, that is not what I said. I do not expect them to stop their military activities. I would expect to follow the language of the President when he said that if they would agree to start negotiations promptly and not take advantage of the pause in the bombing.
>
> Senator Thurmond: What do you mean by taking advantage if they continue their military activities?
>
> Mr. Clifford: Their military activity will continue in South Vietnam, I assume, until there is a ceasefire agreed upon. I assume that they will continue to transport the normal amount of goods, munitions, and men to South Vietnam. I assume that we will continue to maintain our forces and support our forces during that period. So what I am suggesting, in the language of the President, is that he would insist

that they not take advantage of the suspension of the bombing.

The next day, almost every newspaper singled out some rather routine comments I had made supporting our over-all policy, and ignored my explanation of the San Antonio formula. Most of the reporters covering the hearings had simply assumed, from my reputation, that anything I said would be hawkish. James Reston wrote that I "took the hard line on the bombing of North Vietnam." Only a few newspapers grasped the significance of my remarks. One was the Washington *Post*, which editorialized, "Not nearly enough attention was paid to what Defense Secretary-designate Clark Clifford had to say about the Administration's terms for the Vietnam pause, nor is it yet clear whether Mr. Clifford was speaking authoritatively or expressing a personal view."

The *Post* had hit pay dirt, but, fortunately, it did not know it. Inside the Administration, my comments had set off alarm bells, and more perceptive press coverage would only have made our internal discussion more difficult. The morning after my testimony, Rusk and Rostow told the President that my testimony had weakened our negotiating position before Hanoi had even agreed to talk with us. They recommended a White House "clarification" that would have retreated from my testimony. But President Johnson rejected the suggestion, and instead instructed George Christian, the press secretary, to tell the press that my testimony correctly stated Administration policy. A few days later, during a meeting with White House correspondents, the President closed the issue: "Clark Clifford said what I stated in San Antonio and said it better." As a lawyer, I had simply offered what I considered the most reasonable interpretation of the San Antonio formula. The words "not take advantage of" could mean only what I had outlined. Yet what I said had led to an immediate conflict with both Secretary of State Dean Rusk and National Security Assistant Walt Rostow. Many more would follow.



"Don't think of it as seaweed—think of it as a sea vegetable."

EVEN in an eventful year, some days live forever. January 30, 1968, began for me simply as the day on which I expected to be confirmed by the Senate. It ended as something quite different. At midday, as the Senate confirmed me as Secretary of Defense, by a unanimous vote, I was attending the Tuesday Lunch. The first item on the agenda was the President's obsession: Khe Sanh. General Wheeler reported that the area was quiet and the weather good. Wheeler had just spoken to Westmoreland, who was still braced for an all-out attack there. In passing, Wheeler noted that there had been a series of hit-and-run attacks by the Communists in various other parts of Vietnam overnight.

Wheeler astonished me by requesting authority for Westmoreland "to organize a feint of a full-scale landing north of the Demilitarized Zone"—the area dividing North and South Vietnam. Westmoreland's plan was to move amphibious ships close to the North Vietnamese coast and then tell the South Vietnamese that we were planning to invade North Vietnam. Wheeler said he was confident that Communist spies inside South Vietnam's high command would then "make sure the North Vietnamese learn of it." The objective, Wheeler explained, was to lessen the pressure on Khe Sanh by tricking Hanoi into moving troops away from Khe Sanh to defend the coastline.

Again to my surprise, McNamara supported Wheeler's request. Responsibility for the Pentagon still rested entirely with McNamara, but I did not like getting caught off guard in this manner on an issue that would soon fall within my purview. The idea made no sense to me—it could easily leak, backfire, or lead to actual ground combat in North Vietnam—and I said so. The President, however, did not wish to reject outright, at such an early stage, a military request supported by McNamara. "Go ahead and plan it," he said. "I want to give weight to the field commander's recommendation in this case."

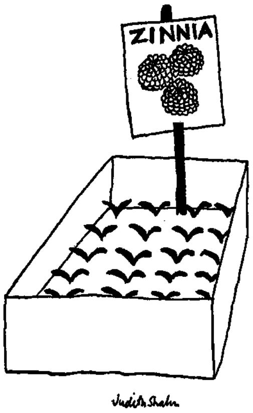
As I was reflecting on how I might stop the planning for this strange idea, I saw an aide enter and hand a note to Rostow. Rostow slipped out of the room. He returned a few minutes later, at 2:35 P.M., and interrupted our discussion with a dramatic announcement: "We have just been informed we are being heavily mortared in Saigon. The Presidential Palace, our B.O.Q.s, the American Embassy, and the city itself have been hit."

The brief silence was broken by the President. "This could be very bad," he said.

"I hope that it is not Ambassador Bunker's residence," Rusk added.

No one in the room had any sense of the gravity of the event that was unfolding in the nighttime hours on the other side of the world. Wheeler thought that it might be a series of small attacks. "This same type of thing has happened before," he said. "In a city like Saigon, people can infiltrate easily. They can fire and run. It is impossible to stop this in its entirety. This is about as tough to stop as it is to protect against a mugging in Washington." He added, "They are making a major effort to mount a series of these actions to make a big splurge at Tet."

"This is a public-relations problem, not a military one," McNamara said. "The answer to the mortar attacks is success at Khe Sanh. We must get our story across. . . . We are inflicting very heavy casualties on the enemy and we are not unprepared for the encounter."



While the success of the Tet offensive as a military campaign may remain in dispute, there can be no doubt that it was a turning point in the war. Its size and scope made a mockery of what the American military had told the public about the war, and devastated Administration credibility. Five of South Vietnam's six major cities, thirty-nine of its forty-four provincial capitals, and at least seventy-one of its two hundred and forty-five district towns were attacked. American losses were heavier than ever before: 3,895 killed in eight weeks. South Vietnamese forces sustained 4,954 recorded deaths—proportionately the smallest loss of the major combatants. At least fourteen thousand noncombatant men, women, and children were also killed in the fighting. Almost a million new refugees, more than a third of them in and around Saigon, put the South Vietnamese government under a nearly intolerable strain.

The Communists paid a fearful price for the offensive, losing perhaps as many as fifty-eight thousand men. But, with typical ruthlessness, they kept most of their main force and regular units on the sidelines, sacrificing mostly local militia, irregular units, and hapless farmers forced into suicidal missions. If they had committed more of their regulars, they might well have achieved the one thing that eluded them at Tet—a clear-cut military victory in some area of the country.

After the event, the American military and their defenders called the Communist offensive a military defeat for the enemy that became, in General Wheeler's words, "a propaganda victory for the North Vietnamese here in the United States." To support this view, they made, and continue to make, a series of claims, some of them contradictory, some simply incomprehensible. One argument that the military produced, for example, was that the local Vietcong forces—that is, indigenous Southerners—had been so depleted that the enemy had been forced to send large numbers of North Vietnamese regulars into the South to save the insurgency. I never understood why anyone should have regarded that as an indication of success. To me it was ominous news; it meant that from now on the United States and the South Vietnamese would be facing a better-trained, better-equipped enemy and casualties would increase.

In my view, the continuing military reassessment of the Tet offensive since it ended has been incomplete and self-serving. Despite their retrospective claims to the contrary, at the time of the initial attacks the reaction of some of our most senior military leaders approached panic. Their intelligence failure was a critical factor in both the military setbacks they suffered in the early phase of the offensive and the backlash in American public opinion. The military and its defenders later tried to minimize the heavy losses suffered by American troops and the enormous damage that the offensive had caused to the pacification campaign. Pacification—the program to create a strong government presence in the hamlets and villages of South Vietnam—was generally regarded by American officials as the most important long-term aspect of the war. Those in charge of the program had predicted that 1968 would be the year of decisive success. Tet shattered more than this empty rhetoric: with the towns and cities of South Vietnam under attack, most of the villages and hamlets were undefended, and the Vietcong forces were able to deal the pacification program a serious blow.

Supporters of the war later pointed to inaccurate reporting by the press during the Tet offensive as a major reason for the turnaround in American public opinion just when United States forces were in a position to win in the field. This view is misinformed. The press made errors in reporting, as it does in every war, but the bulk of the reporting during the war reflected the official position. Contrary to the assertions of a generation of right-wing revisionists, reporters and the anti-war movement did not defeat America in Vietnam. Our policy failed because it was based on false premises and false promises. If the actual results in Vietnam had approached even remotely what Washington and Saigon had publicly predicted for many years, the American people would have continued to support their government.

Many of the Administration's severest critics wanted to see escalation, not deëscalation, of the war. But it mattered relatively little politically whether the Administration's opponents were hawks or doves; what was clear was that Americans had wearied of a war that seemed to have no end. Despite their mutual antipathy, both hawks and doves wanted to see an early end to the American involvement in the war, and both created pressures on the Administration for a dramatic change in the situation.

Thus the most serious American casualty at Tet was the loss of the public's confidence in its leaders. Public confidence in General Westmoreland, which had been high until Tet, was shattered, never to be rebuilt. Public confidence in the rest of the American government, including President Johnson, was severely damaged. With an unwise and costly initial comment, on February 2nd, President Johnson aggravated his problem: he pronounced the three-day-old offensive "a complete failure." George Aiken, of Vermont, the dean of the Senate Republicans, responded acidly, "If this is failure, I hope the Vietcong never have a major success."

On my trip to the Pacific with General Taylor the previous summer, I had seen that Vietnam's neighbors were far from eager to contribute more forces to the war effort. But until the Tet offensive I still accepted the military's view that the war was being won in the field. I had always believed that our nation would not be willing to fight a limited war for an unlimited time, in pursuit of uncertain and ill-defined objectives in a region of debatable national-security importance. Now my faith in our ability to achieve our objectives within an acceptable length of time was shaken, and began to erode.

EVEN though my appointment had been confirmed by the Senate on January 30th, the President and I asked McNamara to stay at the Pentagon until late February, when the budget process, which McNamara understood better than I ever could have, would be under control. In the month between my confirmation and my taking over the Pentagon, I was not burdened by any of the formal responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense. Half private citizen and half Cabinet member, I was free to concentrate almost exclusively on Vietnam.

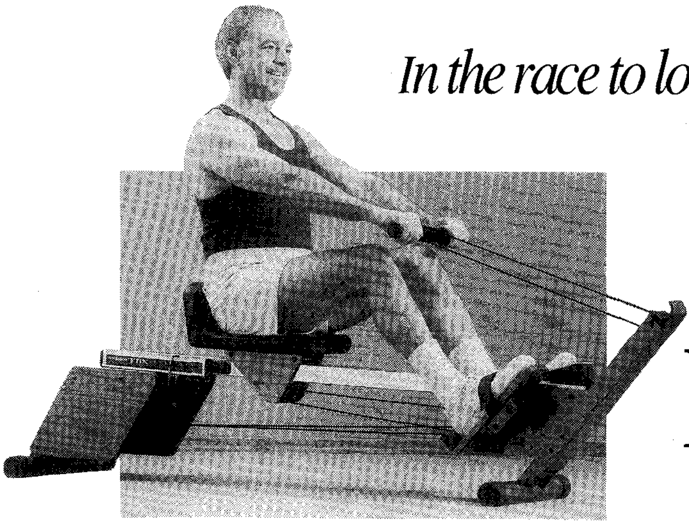
It is hard to imagine or to re-create the atmosphere in Washington in the sixty days after Tet. The pressure grew so intense that at times I felt that the government itself might come apart at the seams. Leadership was fraying at its very center—something rare in a nation with so stable a governmental structure. In later years, almost every one of the men who lived through the crisis claimed that he had reacted calmly to events, while his colleagues had panicked or lost their nerve. The fact is that everyone, military or civilian, was profoundly affected by the Tet offensive. This was true equally of those whose positions on Vietnam changed and of those who later viewed Tet as a great victory. There was, for a brief time, something approaching paralysis, and a sense of events spiralling out of the control of the nation's leaders.

My perceptions of the war continued to change. Fundamental assumptions on which I had based my views crumbled, not with a single dramatic revelation but slowly and unevenly. The policy implications of this change were complex, and as my viewpoint shifted I sometimes supported positions that were internally contradictory. So did some of my colleagues in the government. This can be seen from a review of some of the most important events and discussions at the White House.

February 7th: North Vietnamese forces overran the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp near Khe Sanh, using tanks for the first time in the war. Still convinced that the nationwide Communist offensive was the diversion and Khe Sanh the main event, Westmoreland responded by holding a large number of his forces, including a brigade of the 101st Airborne Division and two brigades of the 1st Cavalry Division, in reserve in the northern part of the country to protect Khe Sanh.

February 9th: For the first time since the offensive began, Wheeler told the President that Westmoreland "needs reinforcements," and described the situation as "an emergency."

I expressed my concern. "There is a very strange contradiction in what we are saying and doing," I said. "We have palpably told the American people that (a) the Communist offensive was not a victory for the Communists, (b) there was no uprising of the Vietnamese in support of the enemy, and (c) it cost the enemy between twenty and twenty-five thousand of its combat troops. Now our reaction to all this is to say that the situation is more dangerous today than it was before all this occurred. We are saying that we need more troops, more ammunition, and we need to call up the Reserves. I think we should give some very serious thought



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to how we explain saying, on one hand, the enemy did not have a victory and, on the other, we are in need of many more troops, and possibly even an emergency call-up."

After the meeting, Wheeler sent Westmoreland a private message inviting him to ask for more troops: "My sensing is that the critical phase of the war is upon us, and I do not believe that you should refrain from asking for what you believe is required under the circumstances." But, in order to prevent leaks, Wheeler told Westmoreland that any further messages concerning additional troops should be sent through the "back channel"—a special, confidential channel reserved for private communications between the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and senior field commanders.

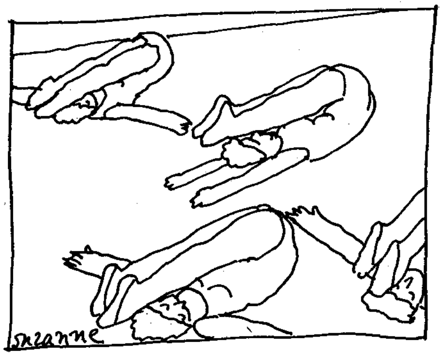
February 10th: President Johnson removed some of the restrictions surrounding the bombing of the North—a move I supported—and American planes attacked targets in Haiphong for the first time since the offensive began. Meanwhile, American marines, in brutal house-to-house fighting in Hue, began the effort to recapture the most historic site in Vietnam, the ancient imperial citadel.

Westmoreland still believed that the Tet offensive was probably an effort to distract our attention from Khe Sanh. "While it is always possible that the enemy buildup in the Khe Sanh–DMZ area is a diversion, I consider this possibility remote," he wrote in a cable that reached Wheeler. This Khe Sanh obsession, which the President still shared, had begun to trouble me. "All we have heard is about the preparations the North Vietnamese have made for the attack at Khe Sanh," I said. "I have a feeling that they are going to do something different. Our people were surprised by the twenty-four attacks on the cities last week. God knows the South Vietnamese were surprised. They had half their men on holiday. There may be a feint [at Khe Sanh] and a surprise coming up. . . . Giap may want to keep Westy's twenty thousand troops tied down up north."

McNamara told President Johnson that he was "trying to devise a plan which will get the men Westmoreland needs without the disastrous consequences of the action recommended by the J.C.S." I thereupon told the President that this was a bad time to ask for any new program or buildup. He responded that extending the length of tours of duty, another possibility that was being considered, "would strike morale a death blow."

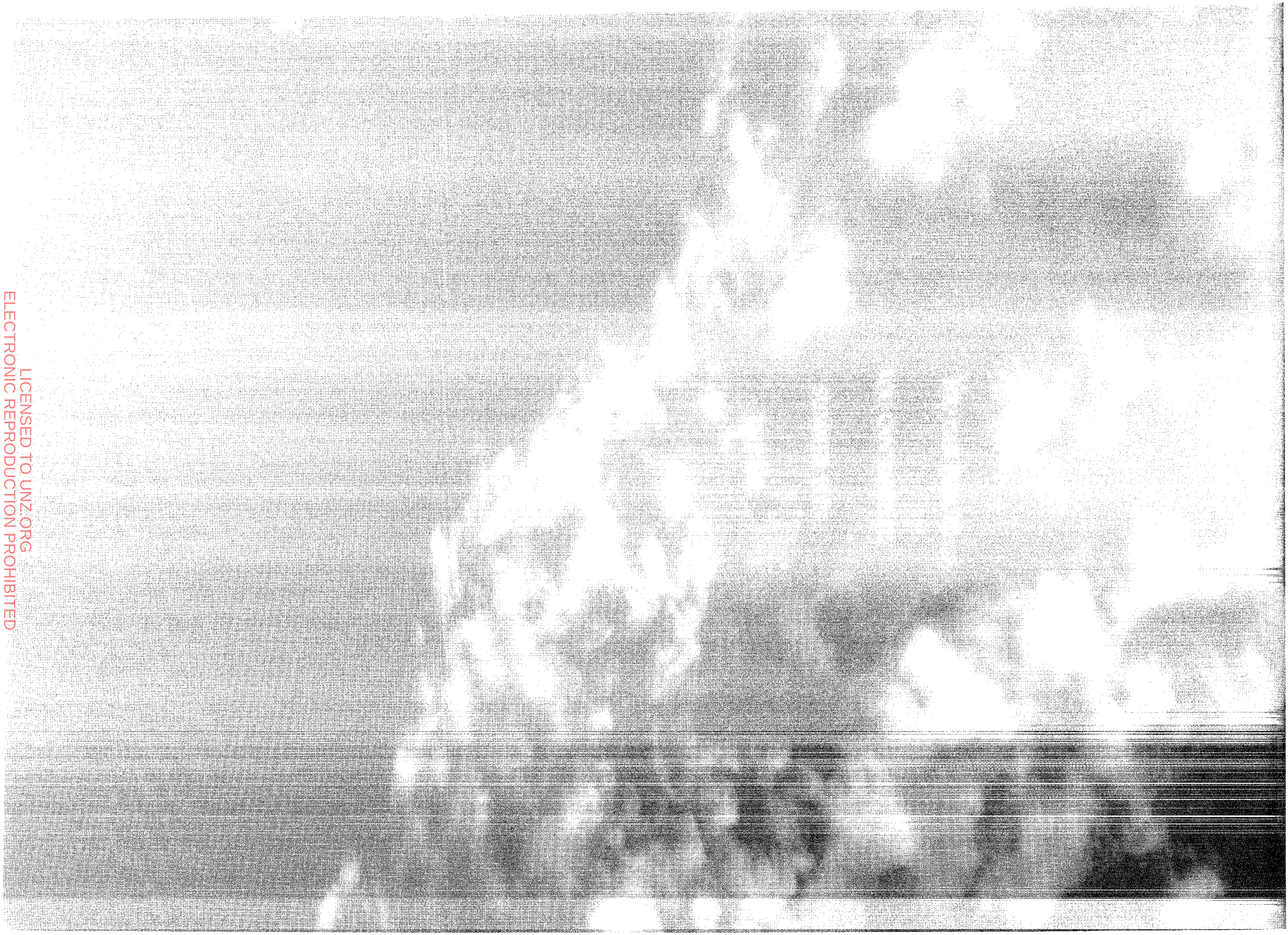
February 11th: The situation was so disturbing that President Johnson called a Sunday meeting of Rusk, McNamara, Wheeler, Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms, Maxwell Taylor, who was serving as a Presidential adviser, and me in the family quarters of the White House. Westmoreland had reported that the South Vietnamese Army was seriously weakened by casualties and desertion. The President clearly did not wish to receive a formal request from the military for reinforcements, for fear that if it leaked he would be under great pressure to respond immediately. A delicate minuet took place to create the fiction that no request was being made. In response to a series of carefully phrased questions from the President, Wheeler and McNamara said that neither Westmoreland nor the Joint Chiefs were formally requesting more troops. But Maxwell Taylor, tiring of the charade, interrupted the exchange. "I am out of tune with this meeting," he said. "I read General Westmoreland's cable quite differently from you gentlemen." Taylor said that it was clear to him that although Westmoreland had not yet asked for a specific number of troops, his forces were tied down at Khe Sanh, and he was asking for reinforcements. Rusk observed dryly that if this was Westmoreland's way of requesting more troops "he has a poor colonel doing the drafting for him."

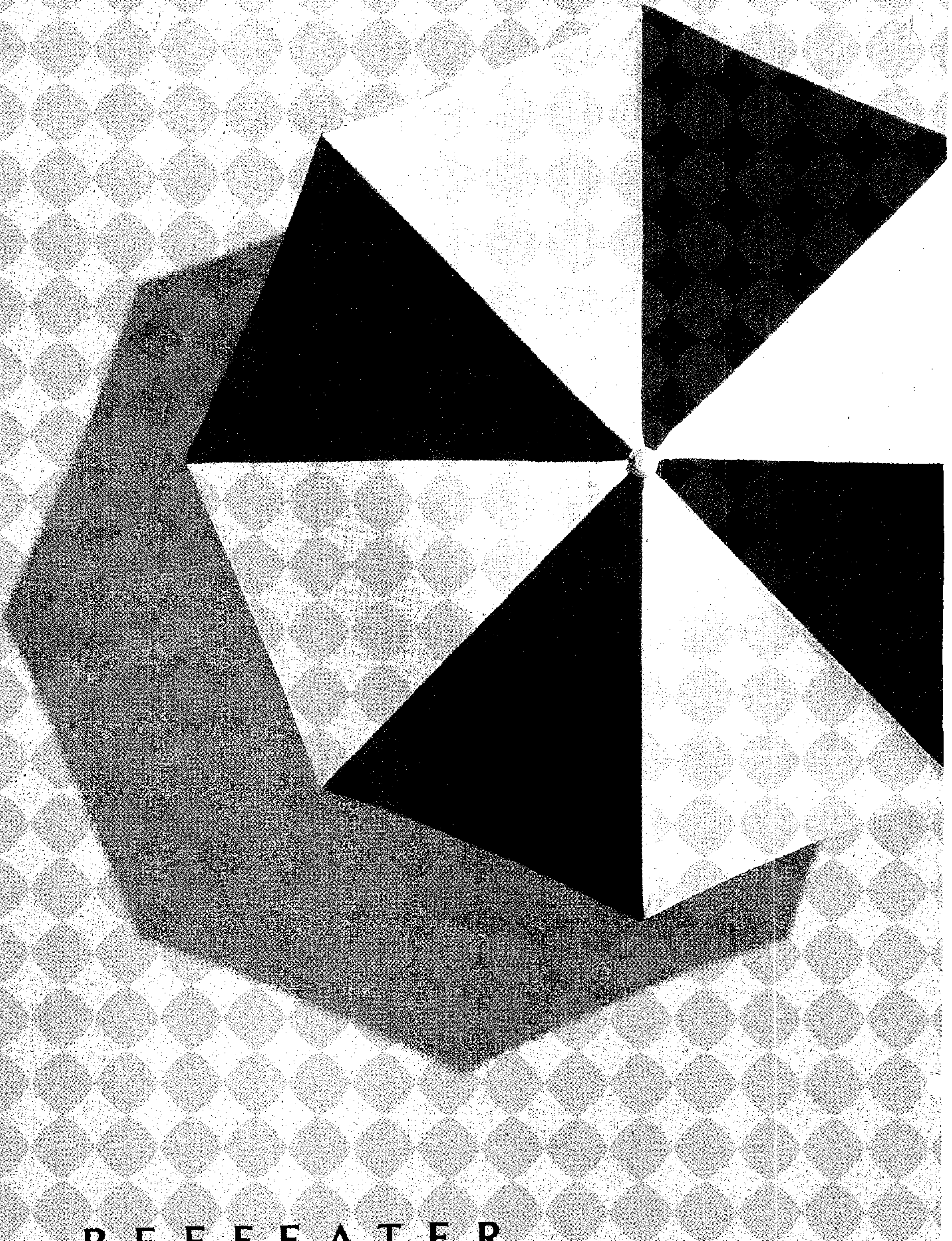
February 12th: Westmoreland, alerted by Wheeler through the back channel that his earlier message had been unclear, removed any ambiguity in his position. "I am expressing a firm request for additional troops," he told us, "not because I fear defeat if I am not reinforced, but because I do not feel that I can fully grasp the initiative from the recently reinforced enemy without them. On the other hand a setback is fully possible if I am not reinforced." In a second message to Wheeler, Westmoreland went further, saying that he faced "a major risk, unless I get reinforcements, which I desperately need." In the first message, however, Westmoreland had continued to focus on the besieged marines. "I still see the enemy position in the Khe Sanh/DMZ area as the greatest single threat," he said.



In a two-hour meeting over lunch, the President showed frustration and revealed his own continuing obsession with Khe Sanh. Near the end of the meeting, he asked us if we all felt that Westmoreland should get more troops. McNamara, Rusk, Helms, Wheeler, Taylor, and Rostow each said yes. I remained silent. The President asked, "Is there any objection?" I continued to remain silent. McNamara still spoke for Defense, and I felt that my views should be given to the President in private until I was sworn in. The President approved the proposal, and ten thousand five hundred airborne troops and marines started moving out to Vietnam the next day.

February 13th: The Under-Secretary of the Air Force, Townsend Hoopes, sent me—with, as he put it, "more candor than discretion"—a long personal letter arguing that "the idea of a US military victory in Vietnam is a dangerous illusion," that de-escalation was a prerequisite for a settlement, and that cessation of the bombing was essential to start that process. Hoopes said Air Force reports showed that since the beginning of air strikes, in 1965, the flow of men and matériel from the North to the South had "definitely increased." The bombing, he concluded, had caused "heavy damage" to North Vietnam's economy and society, but Hanoi's allies had more than made up for the damage with foreign aid, and Hanoi's capacity for waging war at whatever level it wished was not seriously impaired. Hoopes was critical of Westmoreland's attrition strategy, and argued that there were both military and political reasons to alter his strategy in order to reduce American casualties. The present approach, he wrote, with its reliance on search-and-destroy tactics, often led to combat "in the worst possible terrain for American forces, at the time of the





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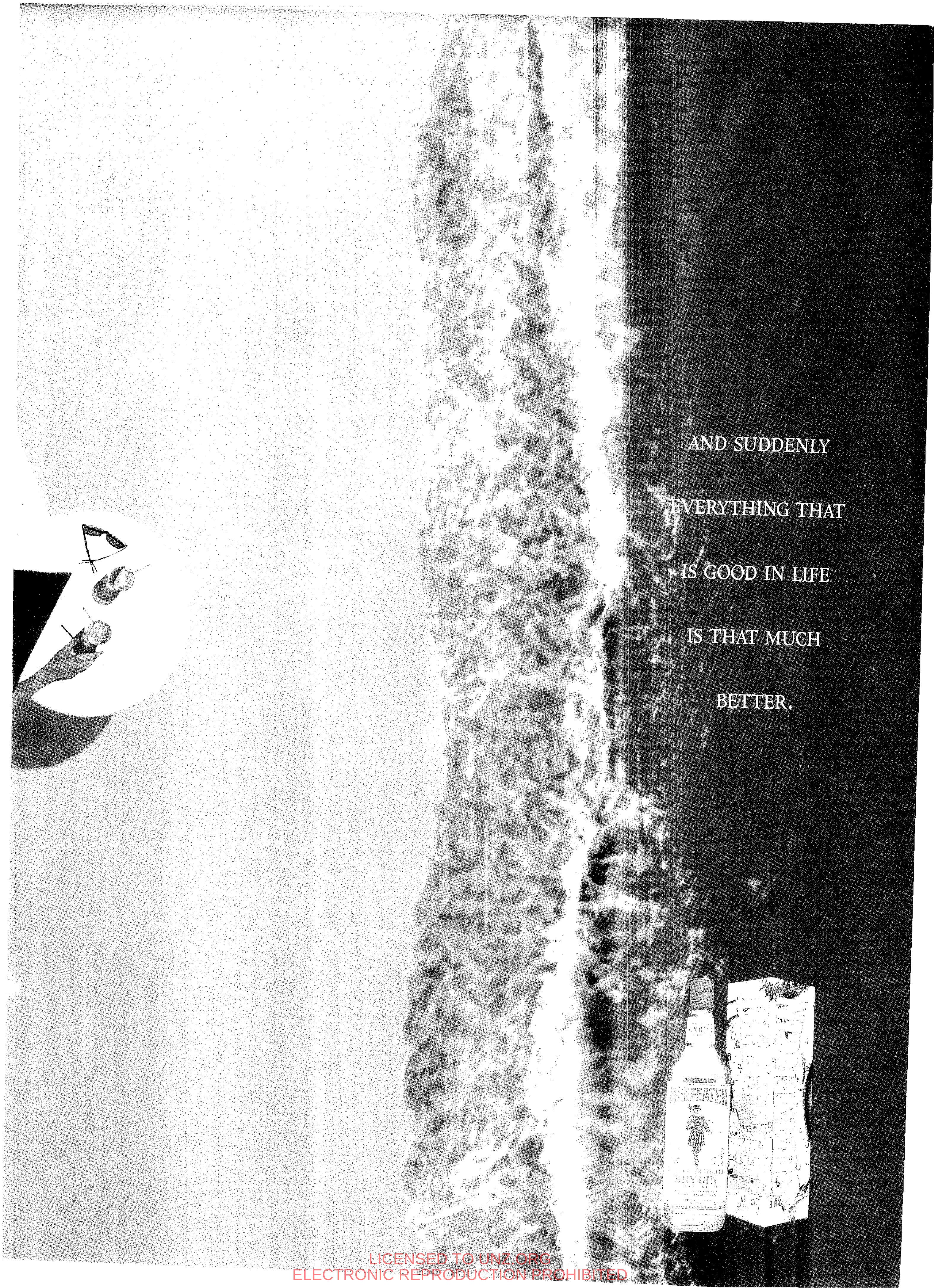
AND SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING THAT
IS GOOD IN LIFE
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enemy's choosing, and with inconclusive results."

ALMOST every morning's situation reports added to the sense of disaster. On February 18th, Communist forces launched a new wave of rocket attacks against forty-five cities and major installations across Vietnam, and attacked Saigon with 122-mm. rockets. On February 21st, American airplanes struck the main radio station near the center of Hanoi, another first. On February 22nd, the Pentagon reported the highest one-week American casualty toll of the war—543 killed, 2,547 wounded. We noted another disturbing fact: for the first time in the war, American casualties were significantly higher, proportionally, than those of the South Vietnamese Army. On February 23rd, Hanoi ordered its embattled troops in Hue to make a fighting withdrawal from the citadel. On the same day, the Department of Defense announced that it would draft forty-eight thousand more men, the second-highest call-up of the Vietnam War, and Khe Sanh came under heavy artillery, rocket, and mortar fire. On February 25th, Westmoreland told the Associated Press that more combat troops would probably be necessary. That afternoon, a rare and welcome success: the marines cleared the last enemy forces from the remnants of the citadel in Hue.

At the end of February, after a three-day visit to Vietnam, General Wheeler submitted a report that was to frame one of the most dramatic and consequential policy debates since the Second World War. Wheeler's report contained a bleak assessment of the situation and a request for additional troops so large that it would affect the course of the war and American politics forever.

General Wheeler played a more important role in events and decisions than most outside observers and historians—who focussed their attention on more visible men, like Westmoreland and McNamara—have realized. Wheeler had a modest, low-key style. He lacked Westmoreland's theatrical appearance and carefully avoided the blustery personal style many military men adopt in dealing with civilians. Wheeler had spent most of his career in staff jobs, and had held only one command in his career—a brief one as a battalion commander in the Second World War—but he was a talented administrator and was skilled in Pentagon politics. Until the Tet offensive, he had been an excellent intermediary between the field commander and the civilians in Washington, skillfully averting confrontations among the Joint Chiefs or between the military and the President. For these abilities he was justly valued by most of the civilians he worked with. His personal standing with President Johnson and Secretary McNamara was especially high, and at the President's request the Senate voted in June, 1968, to extend his service as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, although a heart attack in 1967, which was initially kept secret, had slowed him down somewhat. As it turned out, he served longer than any other chairman of the Joint Chiefs in history, staying for an additional year after the end of the Johnson Administration at the personal request of Richard Nixon.

Wheeler's report on his trip reached Washington by telegram two days before he returned. It had an enormous impact on the limited number of people who saw it. He presented an even grimmer assessment of the Tet offensive than we had heard from Westmoreland and Bunker. It was clear that Wheeler, although he avoided criticizing Westmoreland directly, had lost some degree of confidence in his theatre commander, and no longer fully accepted Westmoreland's judgment of the war. Westmoreland, in his memoirs, later expressed dismay with Wheeler. "Making no mention that I was considering more troops in hope of exploiting the enemy's defeat, nor making any allusion to the need to rebuild the strategic reserve, General Wheeler, probably as a tactic, emphasized uncertainty," he wrote. "Imbued with the aura of crisis in Washington, he at least partially discounted the sanguine briefings I and my staff had given him."

Westmoreland's charge that Wheeler's assessment was based on such tactical, or political, considerations was unfair. He had given us his best judgment of the situation, and, if it was grim, it was not defeatist. Wheeler still wanted to win, as the troop request in his report made clear. But his report damaged Westmoreland, because in any disagreement between the two men President Johnson and his advisers would unquestionably give far greater weight to the views of Wheeler.

Wheeler chose not to share his report with Westmoreland at the time. In sombre language Wheeler wrote:

> This offensive has by no means run its course.... All commanders on the scene agree that [the enemy's] initial attack nearly succeeded in a dozen places and the margin of victory—in some places survival—was very very small indeed.... There is some question as to whether the South Vietnamese Armed Forces have the stamina to withstand the pressure of a prolonged enemy offensive.... In many areas the pacification program has been brought to a halt.... The outcome is not at all clear. I visualize much heavy fighting ahead. Casualties will probably remain high.... The government will have enormous problems with refugees, civilian casualties, morale and recovery.... General Westmoreland's margin will be paper thin.... For these reasons he is asking for additional forces as soon as possible during this calendar year.

Wheeler requested 205,179 additional troops, in three phases. The size of his request simply astonished Washington, and triggered the first fundamental debate over the course of the war since the decisions of 1965. A dispute has continued ever since about the origins and the exact nature of the request.

Ever since, Westmoreland has been deeply distressed by the assumption that the request came directly from him and reflected panic on his part. In looking back on these events, he blamed Wheeler for presenting what Westmoreland viewed as a reasonable request for reinforcements in a pessimistic tone, so as to "exploit [Washington's] belief in crisis." In his memoirs, he wrote of Wheeler, "He saw no possibility at the moment of selling reinforcements in terms of future operations.... Having read their newspapers, who among them would even believe there had been success? Better to exploit their belief in crisis to get the troops, then argue new strategy later." Westmoreland's charge was a serious one: if it was true, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs was guilty of deliberately misleading the President in order to get additional troops authorized for Vietnam. Wheeler died in 1975, before Westmoreland's book was published, but he was an honorable man, and I do not believe the accusation.

General Westmoreland and others

THE

later tried to defend themselves by seeking to portray the request as merely a contingency plan. Westmoreland put this astonishing view forward in a paper he prepared in 1970, when he was Chief of Staff of the Army. "I never considered the plan developed by General Wheeler and me to be a demand or a request *per se* for the deployment of additional forces," he wrote. "The plan submitted to Washington in the wake of the Tet offensive involving additional forces for the year 1968 was not, as had been alleged, an 'emergency request for battlefield reinforcements.' Instead, it was a prudent planning exercise designed to generate the military capability to support future tactical and strategic options." In his memoirs, six years later, Westmoreland added that he had "made no request for immediate deployment other than a Marine regiment and a brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division," and "I well knew that additional troops were unavailable without a call-up of Reserves," and that he had "submitted no request per se for deploying 206,000 troops," and had not been "even aware that the total of the three increments General Wheeler and I had discussed came to 206,000."

When Wheeler's report was declassified, in 1982, well after the memoirs of most of the participants in these events had appeared, it should have settled the dispute. The report speaks for itself, and can be read only as I understood it at the time—a joint request by Westmoreland and the Joint Chiefs for two hundred and five thousand additional men, to be deployed to Vietnam or held in a theatre reserve earmarked for Vietnam by the end of 1968. This was what Wheeler wrote on troop requirements (the italics are mine):

> General Westmoreland wants, as a matter of urgency, a mechanized brigade consisting of one tank battalion and one mechanized battalion and one infantry battalion from the 5th Mechanized Division. He also wants an armored cavalry regiment and the remainder of the 5th Marine Division/Wing, and the acceleration of the deployment of certain supporting units now programmed for deployment under Program 5. These *immediately required* forces . . . he hopes to receive before the first of May. . . .
>
> As a matter of prudence, particularly in light of the protracted NVA buildup, *General Westmoreland states a requirement* during the calendar year for an additional infantry division to anticipate possible deterioration of some ARVN units, and to provide a reasonably available two-division theatre reserve at all times of the year.
>
> It is my judgment that General Westmoreland *requires* a theatre reserve of about two divisions. . . . If Hanoi deploys additional elements of the home army, this reserve might also be committed and additional force requirements would be generated. The rough estimate of added strength required for the three force increments is:

	Army	Navy	USMC	USAF	Total
a. Immediate Increment, Priority One	54,000	8,060	37,132	8,791	107,983
b. Immediate Increment, Priority Two	31,600	4,446	—	5,750	41,796
c. Follow-on Increment	46,700	138	2,004	6,558	55,400
Total	132,300	12,644	39,136	21,099	205,179

SOMETIMES the resolution of a controversial issue is deferred until a major speech is scheduled, at which point the speech-drafting process forces decisions on policy. In early February, we had begun to discuss the idea of a major, nationally televised Presidential address on Vietnam. The original idea had been to report to a nervous nation on the Tet offensive and the Pueblo affair in order to put these events in perspective, defend the conduct of the war, and lay out a firm course for the rest of 1968. As the offensive grew in size, this speech proposal had been set aside to await General Wheeler's return from Saigon.

FEBRUARY 27TH: With the impact of Wheeler's report just beginning to hit us, I joined seven other men—Rusk; McNamara; Under-Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach; William Bundy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs; Rostow; Harry McPherson, the White House special counsel; and Joseph Califano, the principal White House aide for domestic affairs—in Dean Rusk's dining room to resume consideration of a Presidential speech. This meeting was the beginning of a process that led to one of the most dramatic speeches of our time—that of President Johnson on March 31, 1968, announcing that he would limit the bombing of North Vietnam and also that he would not run for reëlection. But it did not start out as that kind of speech; at the outset, it was intended as a tough defense of an aggressive response to the Tet offensive.

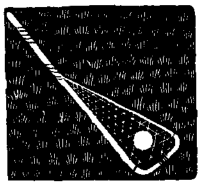
The meeting in Rusk's dining room turned into a fierce discussion of what McNamara called "Westmoreland's request" for additional troops. He said the additional troops would increase the budget by at least ten billion dollars in fiscal year 1969, and more after that. These numbers, as part of a total federal budget that then ran around a hundred billion dollars a year—roughly a tenth the size of budgets in the eighties and nineties—were staggering. They would lead to a big tax increase or more inflation, or both. "This is unbelievable and futile," Harry McPherson said. I admired McPherson's boldness in speaking in this manner in front of Rusk and Rostow.

As we talked, Nick Katzenbach left the room to take a telephone call over a secure line from Hawaii. The call was from Philip Habib, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. Habib, the son of a Lebanese Christian immigrant, had made the enormous leap from the streets of Brooklyn to the very top of the American diplomatic service, and had served as the political counsellor in Saigon from 1965 to 1967. He was outspoken and unafraid to talk back to his superiors, and possessed a fine sense of timing and tactics. He was also a knowledgeable observer of the political scene in Saigon, and Rusk had recently sent him back to his old post for a firsthand assessment.

The secure telephone system was essential for sensitive conversations, but because it made voices sound something like Donald Duck speaking under water it was necessary to take careful notes in order to focus on the substance of the conversation. Katzenbach returned to the meeting and read his notes. Habib said he was "less optimistic" about the political situation in Saigon than he had been before he went back, and he was worried about the stability of the regime. Habib also told Katzenbach that there was "serious disagreement in American circles in Saigon over the 205,000 request."

Rusk and Rostow argued that the enemy had taken a beating at Tet, but I could not agree. "Despite these optimistic reports, the American people and world opinion believe we have suffered a major setback," I said. "How do we gain support for major economic and defense programs if we have told people that things are going well? How do we avoid creating the feeling that we are pounding troops down a rathole? What is our purpose? What is achievable?" I ended by asking for a review of "our entire posture" in Vietnam.

As Rusk responded with a discussion of the need to intensify the bombing of North Vietnam, a remarkable event took place. McNamara seemed to be overcome with conflicting emotions, and his controlled exterior cracked. "The goddam Air Force—they're dropping more on North Vietnam than we dropped on Germany in the last year of World War II, and it's not doing anything," he said. His voice faltered, and for a moment he had difficulty speaking between suppressed sobs. He looked directly at me. "We simply have to end this thing. I just hope you can get hold of it. It is out of control." We were all stunned, but, out of shared pain and embarrassment, we went on with the discussion as though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred. Everyone in the room understood what had happened: this proud, intelligent, and dedicated man was reaching the end of his strength on his last full day in office.



McPherson, who had advocated a major speech on Vietnam even before Tet, was now assigned responsibility for drafting one. A native Texan who had worked for Johnson in the Senate and had then served at the Pentagon during the Kennedy Administration, McPherson was summoned from a job as an Assistant Secretary of State to the White House in 1965, and by 1968 he had become the President's chief speechwriter. As the crisis deepened, I increasingly came to regard this able, witty, and urbane man as my closest ally in the White House—"my silent partner," I once said. At the end of his own notes on the February 27th meeting he made a personal comment to himself that accurately captured the mood at that time. "We are at a point of crisis," he wrote. "McNamara expressed grave doubts over military, economic, political, diplomatic, and moral consequences of a larger force buildup in SVN. Question is whether these profound doubts will be presented to President."

FEBRUARY 28TH: President Johnson returned from the LBJ Ranch at two in the morning. Four hours later, in a heavy rainstorm, General Wheeler returned to Washington from his trip to Vietnam. He went directly to the White House, to join us for a gloomy early-morning breakfast. His weary voice and body language left us with the clear impression that the situation was worse than Bunker and Westmoreland had reported, worse even than his official written report had suggested. While the Army of the Republic of Vietnam had survived better than some early reports indicated, Wheeler said, the power and the scope of the offensive had been greater than was realized in Washington. "Pacification is at a halt," he said. "The Vietcong can roam at will in the countryside." He emphasized that General Westmoreland had no theatre reserve and needed one badly.

I had talked to the President privately before the meeting, urging him not to reach an immediate decision about additional troops under such pressure. I had recommended a full-scale review of policy before any further decisions were made. Rostow had separately offered a similar suggestion, adding that the President might want to consider asking me to oversee such a review once I had become Secretary of Defense.

When the meeting came to an end, the President announced, as I had hoped, that he would not make any decision at this time. He said that he wanted "a new pair of eyes and a fresh outlook" to review the troop request, and asked me to chair a five-day interagency review of the request for additional troops. As we broke up, he said, "Give me the lesser of evils. Give me your recommendations."

At 1 P.M., we met in the East Room of the White House for a ceremony in which the President presented the Medal of Freedom to Robert McNamara. With the leaders of both parties, members of the Supreme Court, and friends, colleagues, and the press looking on, the President praised McNamara as "the very best that we have."

McNamara took the podium, to a sustained ovation. For seven years, he had dominated Washington as few people ever do. To anti-war activists he had become a symbol of the war; to hard-liners he had come to symbolize ineffective half measures. But he had never regarded himself as a hawk, even when he advocated the troop buildup. In his own mind, he had simply ad-

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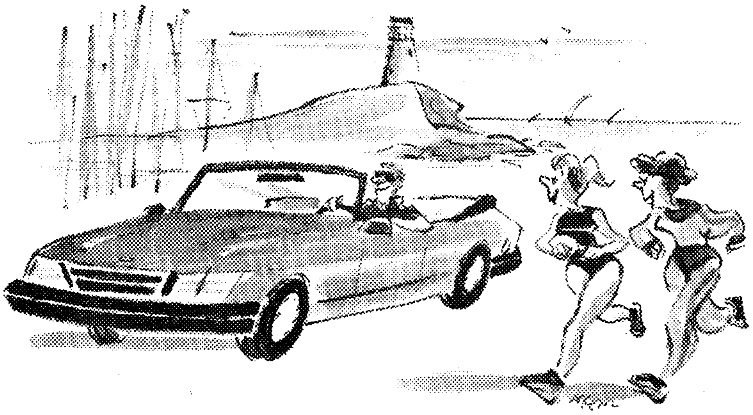

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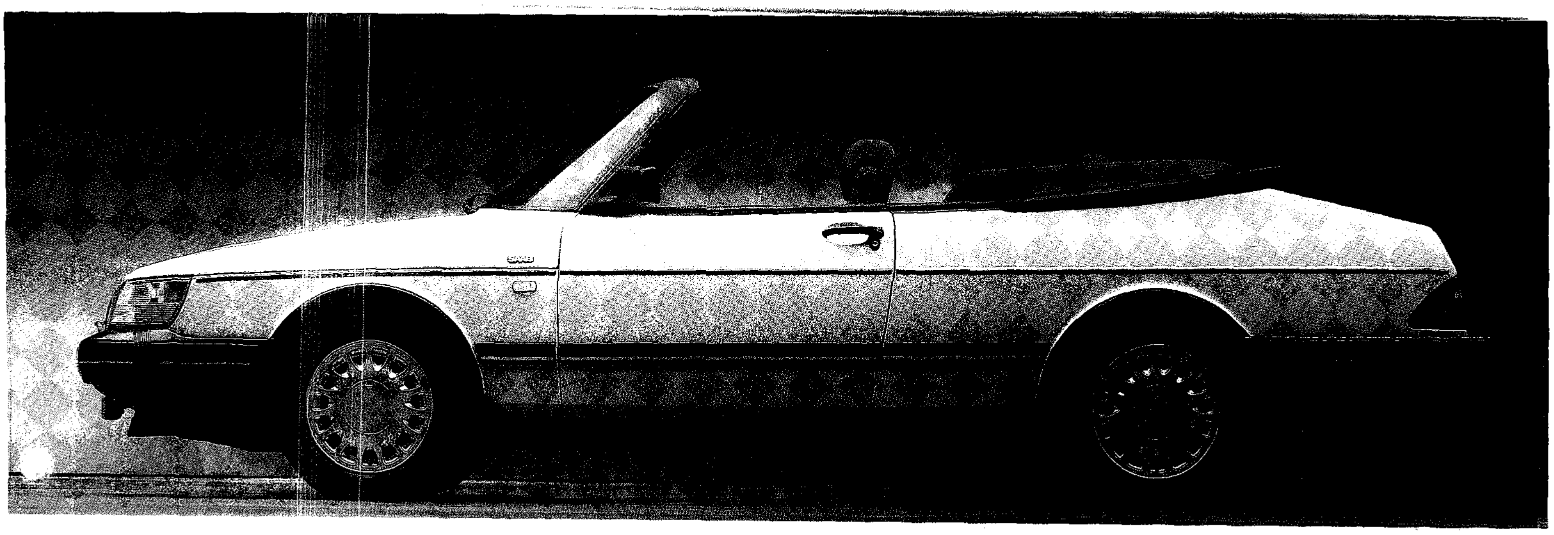
dressed problems as they arose, applying his formidable intellect to the search for the best solution to each. His failure to achieve our objectives, either through military means or negotiations, had almost torn him apart.

The strain was evident as McNamara accepted the Medal of Freedom from the President. He began to speak, but no words came out. We stood silently watching his public pain. Finally, in a choked voice similar to the one I had heard the previous day in Rusk's dining room, he said, "Mr. President, I cannot find words to express what lies in my heart today." He stopped completely and struggled to gain control of himself. "I think I had better respond on another occasion," he said. His mouth moved, but no further words came out. Gently, President Johnson walked over to him, put his arm around him, and led him from the room.

IN his memoirs, General Westmoreland reported that Lyndon Johnson told him I had "disappointed" him. I have no doubt there was a certain, but incomplete, truth to this statement: within weeks, I had come to the conclusion that my overwhelming priority as Secretary of Defense had to be to try to extricate our nation from an endless war. I knew that doing this would change my relationship with Lyndon Johnson, but I felt that my obligation to the nation and to the President himself required me to take the risk.

Our *relationship did not* change overnight. At first, it remained close, but as time went on I found myself functioning on four different levels: deep in the privacy of my own mind, where disillusionment with the war was already well advanced by the time I took the oath of office, on March 1st; in private conversations with a tiny handful of close and trusted colleagues, with whom I could try to form a united front; in guarded dealings with those, such as Rostow and Rusk, who were still committed to the war; and, finally, in my relations with the man who had appointed me. I constantly considered simply sitting down alone with him and trying to convince him that the entire policy had to be changed—and eventually I did just that. But in March Lyndon Johnson would have rejected such flat statements and their messenger as well. I decided that I could be most effective if I moved gradually; by



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summer, President Johnson understood that my opposition to his policy was no longer over tactics or strategy but over fundamental objectives. Our long friendship would never be the same again.

Years later, Lady Bird Johnson was asked how she thought her husband felt about our relationship as the strain over Vietnam grew. "It made him sad, but not angry," she said, and then, speaking for herself, she added, "It was a necessary and courageous thing to do, even if it hurt." I hope that the President felt the same way.

At noon on March 1st, Chief Justice Earl Warren administered the oath of office to me from the same spot in the East Room where, two days earlier, McNamara had received the Medal of Freedom. President Johnson, in his remarks before the swearing-in, joked that it had taken a long time to prevail upon me "to move from the kitchen cabinet to the East Room," and compared the appointment to a wedding: "After a very long and sometimes secret courtship, we are finally making an honest man out of him."

The ceremony was an anticlimax. Forty days after my nomination, I was psychologically already on the job—a job that, after the Tet offensive, had an embattled quality. As soon as the ceremony was over, I rushed back to the Pentagon for a private luncheon with Paul Nitze, the Deputy Secretary of Defense. He had come to Washington in 1940 with James Forrestal, his business associate and friend from Wall Street, and he ultimately served in a wide variety of positions over a fifty-year period, under Presidents from Roosevelt to Reagan. He was genuinely knowledgeable in the field of arms control, and made important contributions to postwar American foreign and defense policy. Yet he was repeatedly frustrated in achieving his goal of becoming either Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense, and believed that he had been denied these positions through the broken promises of Presidents and the maneuvering of his adversaries. His ambition and his impatient intellect often manifested themselves in irritable peevishness and flashes of unveiled contempt for people who he felt did not deserve the high government positions that they held. I knew he felt that he should have had my job, but I had been pleased when he agreed to stay on as deputy. It was clear that it would take time to master the complexities of the job and deal with the crisis of Vietnam at the same time, so I delegated to Nitze responsibility for many important issues in order to concentrate on Vietnam.

Nitze served effectively and proved to be an excellent deputy. In the years after the end of the Johnson Administration, however, our paths diverged, as Nitze supported bizarre ideas like a massive civil-defense system, advocated huge defense budgets, and adopted positions on some national-security issues with which I disagreed. Finally, in 1977, he made several statements concerning the patriotism of a former colleague which I found inexcusable, and our relationship, once cordial, was permanently damaged.

For Nitze, the main arena—indeed, the only arena that mattered—was the confrontation with the Soviet Union; that had been his obsession since the mid-nineteen-forties. In 1968, Rusk and Rostow still viewed Vietnam as a vital part of our worldwide struggle against Moscow, but Nitze had concluded that in fact the war was a diversion from that struggle. He was concerned that the Soviet Union might take advantage of Vietnam to challenge us in Europe, perhaps even try a surprise attack against us—an idea I thought farfetched.

Nitze was a member of an enormously impressive team that McNamara had assembled at the Pentagon. Many of its members had planned or expected to leave with McNamara, but I had asked almost all of them to stay. My request was not automatically granted, however. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Phil G. Goulding, who described himself and his colleagues as "McNamara men," was typical in his attitude. He had assumed he would leave when I arrived, because, he wrote later, he regarded me as a "personal crony" of Johnson's "who had never really run anything except his law firm" and held "Neanderthal ideas on the war in Vietnam." But after both McNamara and Cyrus Vance, the former Deputy Secretary of Defense, talked to Goulding he agreed to stay, performed splendidly, and became a lasting friend. I also kept McNamara's military assistant, Air Force Colonel Robert E. Pursley, one of the most intelligent military officers I have ever known, who proved to be an invaluable bridge to the military services and the rest of the Defense Department.

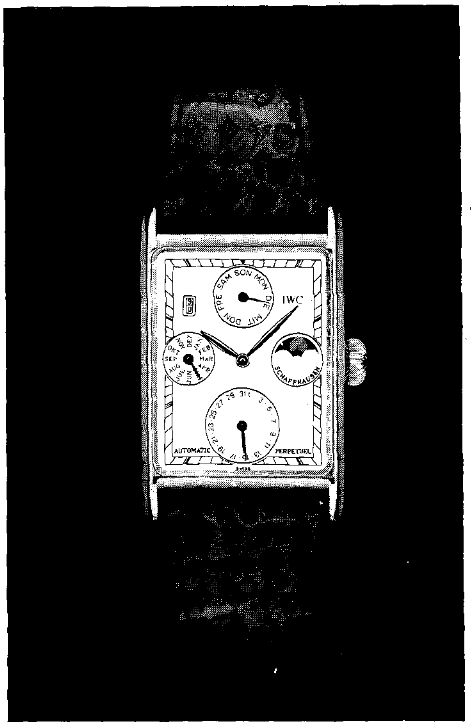
I brought only two people to the Pentagon from the outside world. My secretary, Mary Weiler, followed me across the Potomac. In addition, I asked my treasured colleague from the Truman White House, George Elsey, if he would take leave from the Pullman Company, where he was working as an assistant to the president and the chairman, to help me once more—this time as special assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

The most important member of the team I retained from McNamara turned out to be a forty-eight-year-old lawyer from Massachusetts named Paul Warnke, who was Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. I did not know him before I went to the Pentagon; he soon became my closest adviser and, after we both left the government, my partner in the law firm of Clifford & Warnke. He had a self-deprecating manner and a casual style that made him easy to work with, but I quickly learned that behind that easygoing style lay an incisive mind, which cut fearlessly and articulately through the circumlocutions and evasions of others in the government. For his courage in 1968, Warnke earned my deepest admiration—and the undying enmity of the American military services.

The positions of Warnke and Nitze on Vietnam were often parallel, but "the two Pauls," as they were often called, approached the war from different starting points. Like Nitze, Warnke had concluded that the bombing of the North would neither force Hanoi to the negotiating table nor cut off the relatively small amount of supplies and forces the enemy needed in the South. Unlike Nitze, he did not relate our involvement in Vietnam to our Soviet policy; to Warnke, these were separate matters, connected only if Moscow could help in negotiating a way out of the war. He felt that the United States had made a mistake in going into Vietnam in the first place, and he saw the war as unwinnable at any reasonable level of military commitment—to a large extent, because of the ineffectiveness of the Saigon government.

Nitze, Warnke, Goulding, Elsey, and Pursley formed the inner team that I met with each day at 8:30 A.M. Here with men I trusted and respected I felt free to speak my mind and to solicit their views. I used these meetings as a sounding board for ideas, and they sometimes lasted for hours.

Warnke was assisted in his efforts to affect American policy by an impressive group of younger civilians, among them my travelling companion from the previous year's Pacific trip, Richard Steadman; a bright thirty-year-old Deputy Assistant Secretary, Morton Halperin; and an unusually gifted young academic, Leslie H. Gelb, who had recently left the staff of Senator



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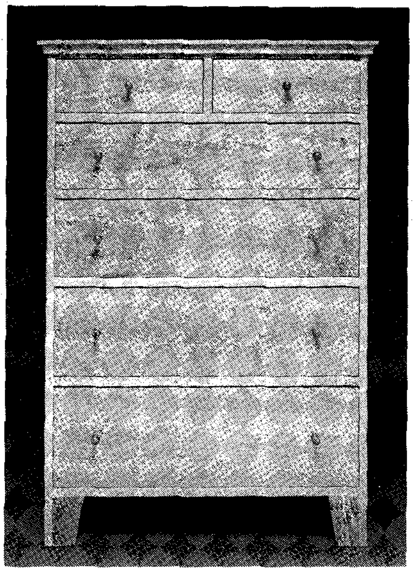

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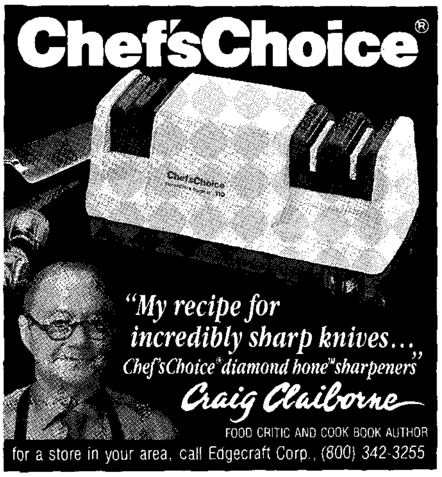

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Jacob Javits. Warnke's staff also included some impressive mid-level military officers with experience in the field in Vietnam, who risked their careers by pointing out weaknesses in the official military reporting from Saigon.

The “civilians in the Pentagon,” especially Warnke and his staff, were attacked by many supporters of the war, including Westmoreland, Rostow, the columnist Joseph Alsop, and President Johnson himself, as having been responsible for spreading their biases against the war like an infectious virus, first to McNamara and then to me. “They excited [McNamara] with their brilliance,” Johnson said bitterly after he had left the White House. Later, some of the right wing even charged that these men had *welcomed* America's defeat. Such accusations often came from people who had been opponents of the war in the sixties (even, in several cases, evading the draft through academic or other deferments), who were trying to establish or reëstablish their conservative credentials during the Reagan years. Aside from the backhanded tribute to the influence of these “civilians,” these charges were ridiculous and patently false.

For the most part, the young civilians in the Pentagon were imbued with the idealistic attitude toward public service that came from the Kennedy era. They had believed in our original objective in Vietnam, and they hated the idea of an American defeat there just as much as their military colleagues did. Only with the greatest reluctance did they conclude that the war could not be won. They knew that the fight to change policy would be difficult, and risky to their careers, but they undertook it, out of a conviction and a patriotism every bit as profound as that of the military. Warnke and his colleagues argued their case with logic, skill, and courage, but what changed my opinion on the war was, in the end, the failure of the supporters of the war—especially the military—to make a convincing case that we could achieve our objectives at a cost acceptable to the nation.

My first few days as Secretary of Defense were devoted almost entirely to chairing the Vietnam Task Force. The meetings, which took place in my conference room, were attended by a large number of senior officials, including, at various times, Rusk, Katzenbach, Bill Bundy, Nitze, Warnke, Taylor, Helms, Wheeler, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Fowler. Our primary assignment was to give the President a recommendation on the Wheeler-Westmoreland troop request. But the President also asked that we produce, if possible, recommendations that would “reconcile the military, diplomatic, economic, congressional, and public-opinion problems involved.” I knew there would be no way to reach a consensus on such a range of issues in just a few days. Furthermore, I knew that the main field of battle was not the Vietnam Task Force but the President's mind. In my first week in office, I had not yet reached a decision on how to handle several critical issues, including the bombing of the North and the American ground strategy, but I was already unalterably opposed to the request for more troops.

I knew that I had only a limited amount of time before my status as the “new boy in town” would end. But for a few weeks I could use relative ignorance as an excuse to ask questions that had not been mentioned in high-level meetings in more than three years—questions so fundamental that if they had come from anyone else in the room they would have been dismissed instantly as being deliberately provocative. The others had worked together so long that perhaps only an outsider could break them out of their own stalemate.

TASK FORCE MEETING, MARCH 2ND: The discussion was often confused and emotional. I questioned the military as though they were witnesses in a courtroom, politely but firmly asking them to justify the request for two hundred and five thousand troops. Although there is no precise record of the exchange, it went something like this:

“Will 205,000 more men do the job?” I asked.

They could give no assurance that they would.

“If 205,000 might not be sufficient, how many more troops might be needed—and when?”

There was no way of knowing.

“Can the enemy respond with a buildup of his own?”

He could.

“Can bombing stop the war?”

No. Bombing was inflicting heavy personnel and matériel losses, but by itself it would not stop the war.

"Will stepping up the bombing decrease American casualties?"

Very little, if at all. Our casualties are a result of the intensity of the ground fighting in the South.

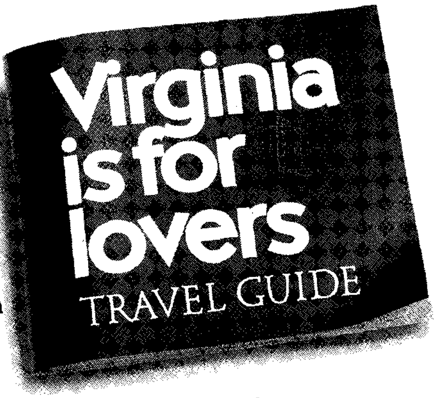
"How long must we keep on sending our men and carrying the main burden of combat?"

We do not know when, if ever, the South Vietnamese will be ready to carry the main burden of the war.

This exchange, and others like it, disturbed me greatly. The military was utterly unable to provide an acceptable rationale for the troop increase. Although I kept my feelings private, I was appalled. Nothing had prepared me for the weakness of the military's case.

TASK FORCE MEETING, MARCH 3RD: We met again, dressed in casual Sunday clothes rather than in our weekday business suits. Rusk wore a loud sports shirt that, in honor of President Truman, he called his Key West shirt. Shortly before the meeting, Warnke and Gelb rushed to my office with the latest draft of the memorandum to the President—known in Pentagon jargon as a D.P.M., for Draft Presidential Memorandum. It was the first time I had met Gelb, who was also the director of a top-secret group that McNamara had established in 1967 to examine the origins and the conduct of the war. Warnke later enjoyed teasing me by saying that when he and Gelb tried to tell me about this project I dismissed it as rather unimportant and a "dumb idea"; I did not understand why anyone in the office of the Secretary of Defense should be collecting historical material at that time. I should have paid more attention to the project; when it was leaked to the *Times*, in 1971, it became famous as the Pentagon Papers.

It was clear that our task force could not reach agreement on the question of additional troops, and I was increasingly concerned that the President would agree to Westmoreland's request on the spot if it was debated in his presence. After the meeting broke up, late in the afternoon, I asked Warnke to redraft the memorandum to the President, dropping a recommendation for the complete cessation of the bombing, and adding a recommendation for a limited call-up of the Reserves and



p. 17: Chief Justice John Marshall meets Yogi Bear.

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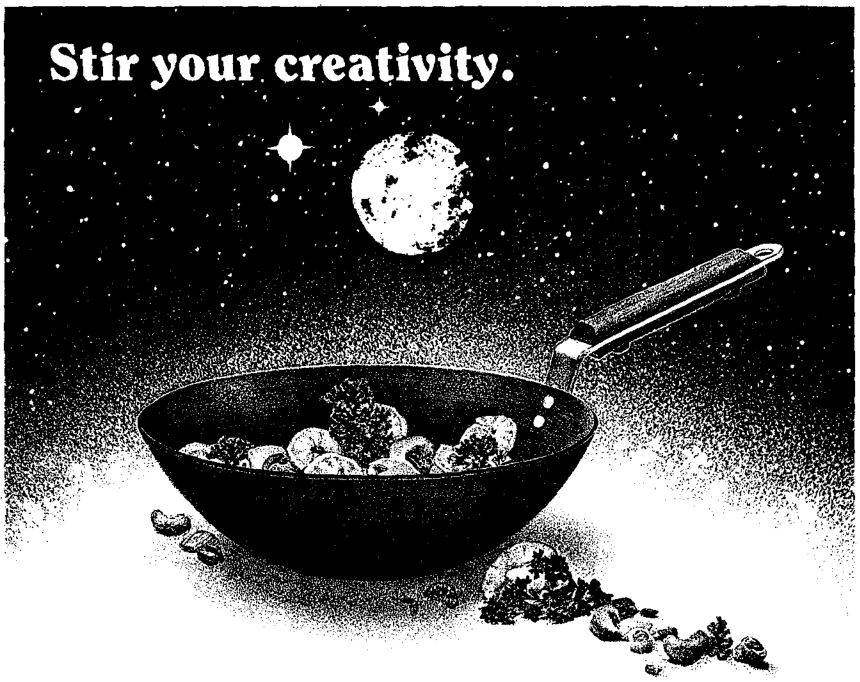
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a small increase in Westmoreland's troop strength. When Warnke seemed disappointed, I told him that the task force was not the right forum, nor was this the right time, to try to resolve the fundamental issues dividing the Administration—we needed to await a better time to present our case. After only four days as Secretary of Defense, I was not ready to take on the collective weight of Rusk, the Joint Chiefs, Westmoreland, and Rostow.

MARCH 4TH: During a chaotic and frantic day, the final version of the D.P.M. was cleared with Rusk and Wheeler. Some historians later interpreted it as a hard-line document; if read without knowledge of the context in which it was written, it could be interpreted as support for the Wheeler-Westmoreland request, because it recommended the deployment of twenty thousand additional men to Vietnam "as close to May 1st as practical," and a Reserve call-up "adequate to meet the balance" of Westmoreland's request. But those were cosmetic compromises with my colleagues; my real objective was contained—in a sense, concealed—in the third, and last, proposal, which I hoped would neutralize the first two by slowing down the military's push for reinforcements. I urged that the final decision on the troop request be contingent upon three factors: a week-by-week reëxamination of the situation; improved performance by the Saigon government and the South Vietnamese Army; and a complete review of our political and strategic options in Vietnam.

When the meeting with the President began, in the Cabinet Room, late Monday afternoon, I briefed for the first time as Secretary of Defense. What I said surprised some of those in the room who had thought they knew my views. I was struck later by the fact that, without thinking about it, I had used some of the same phrases I used at Camp David almost three years earlier, in the debate with McNamara over the buildup:

> This new request by General Westmoreland brings the President to a clearly defined watershed: Do you continue down that same road of more troops, more guns, more planes, more ships? Do you go on killing more Vietcong and more North Vietnamese? . . . As we build up our forces, they build up theirs. The result is simply that we are fighting now at a higher level of intensity. . . . We recommend in this paper that you meet the requirements only for those forces that may be needed to deal with any exigencies in the next three or four months. . . . This is as far as we are willing to go. . . . We are not sure that a conventional military victory, as commonly defined, can be achieved. . . . If we continue with our present policy of adding more troops and increasing our commitment, it may lead us into Laos and Cambodia. . . . We seem to have gotten caught in a sinkhole. We put in more, they match it. . . . I see more and more fighting with more and more casualties on the U.S. side, and no end in sight. . . . Of course, if we in this room had to vote today on sending these 200,000 men or not sending them, we would come out all over the lot. We would be split. But all of us wonder if we are really making progress toward our goal.

Treasury Secretary Henry Fowler followed me with a brutal description of the fiscal and economic implications of the buildup of the Reserves. I could see that it had a strong impact on the President and on Rusk, and even on Wheeler, who surprised me by then backing away from the Wheeler-Westmoreland troop request. Even though Wheeler still kept open the possibility of asking for more troops at a later date, I noted that he was clearly dissociating himself from the request; he referred to it throughout the meeting as "Westmoreland's request." At one point, he said:

> If we could provide Westy with the troops he wants, I would recommend they be sent. They cannot be provided. 22,000 is the best that we can do by 15 June. I find nothing wrong with going along with this track. . . . With the call-up of the Reserves, you can still meet Westmoreland's request by 1 September and 1 December, but not by 1 May.

The President asked about getting negotiations started. Rusk replied that the negotiating track was "quite bleak," a position that he had taken often in the past. But this time Paul Nitze unexpectedly pressed Rusk on the need to consider a bombing halt. "We must make up our minds when we want to cease the bombing to see what happens," Nitze said. "We must choose our own time."

Rusk was silent for a few moments, then gave a surprising reply. Nothing in our previous discussions had prepared me for it. "Well, we could stop the bombing during the rainy season in the North," he said. He said that it would not cost us much militarily, since our air sorties were way down at that time anyway.

President Johnson responded immediately, as if seeing a new life preserver in a stormy sea: "Dean, I want you to *really* get on your horse on that one, right away."

COUNTLESS articles, memoirs, and histories have been written about March, 1968. But because several proposals for a complete bombing halt had been circulating within the government for months confusion has continued to surround the origins of President Johnson's March 31st decision to limit the bombing of North Vietnam. It is high time to clear up the confusion. Both McNamara and Katzenbach had proposed a full bombing halt in November, 1967, but their proposals had never received serious consideration. The first formal discussion of a bombing halt took place at the Tuesday Lunch on March 5th, the day after the President told Rusk to get on his horse.

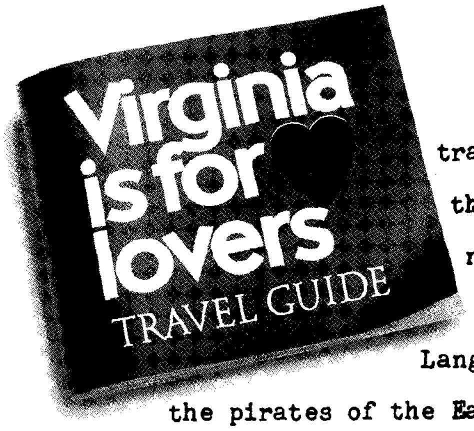
When the President asked what had been done about a bombing halt, Rusk was prepared. "We have an idea that would put additional responsibility on Hanoi for not seeking peace," he said. Pulling a piece of paper out of his breast pocket, he read a draft Presidential statement he had prepared:

> After consultation with our allies, I have directed that U.S. bombing attacks on North Vietnam be limited to those areas which are integrally related to the battlefield. . . . Whether this step I have taken can be a step toward peace is for Hanoi to determine.

Rusk has often been portrayed by historians as oblivious of or ignorant of the domestic political aspects of foreign policy, but the fact is that in his career he had dealt repeatedly with those foreign-policy issues which were the most political, including Israel, the Korean War, the fall of China to the Communists, and relations with the Soviet Union. In suggesting that the bombing be restricted to "those areas which are integrally related to the battlefield," Rusk had as his primary motive to buy time at home for the war effort by showing the American people that we had "walked the last mile" for peace, while continuing the bombing in the area just north of the Demilitarized Zone.

The President asked what Hanoi's reaction would be. Rusk said he did not expect Hanoi to respond to this proposal. "My guess is that a bombing pause would last about three days," he said. "It would not hold up if they attacked either Khe Sanh or the cities. If there is no response from Hanoi by the time

p. 9: See 18th century artisans produce barrels and baskets of fun.



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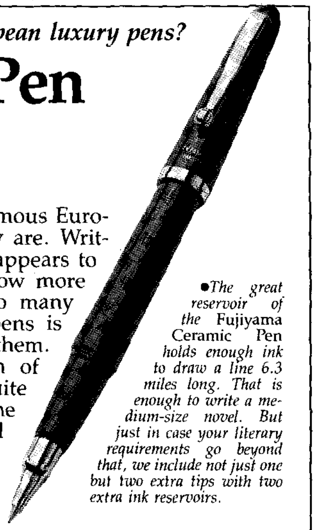

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the bad weather has ended, we could resume the bombing. We would not have lost much militarily, and we might regain the public initiative."

I listened in silent skepticism. Since December, 1965, I had opposed turning the bombing on and off as a way of influencing public opinion, on the ground that it would only strengthen Hanoi and cause hard-liners at home to press for heavier bombing. Rusk seemed to be making his proposal primarily as a public-relations move, in order to justify an intensification of the war after its failure; this was the opposite direction from the one I wanted to take. But if we could turn his proposal into part of a definitive change in America's approach to the war, that would be a different matter.

Instead of responding to Rusk's proposal, the President returned to the issue of a Reserve call-up. Reflecting his congressional background, he said he would be guided by what key senators had to say. "I want Bus [Wheeler] and Clark to go up and talk to Dick Russell and his colleagues," he said. Senator Richard Russell, of Georgia, was the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "See if Russell can swallow a call-up of the Reserves, authority to call specialists, and an extension of enlistments. If he can, ask him if he can 'march it through' the Senate and the House."

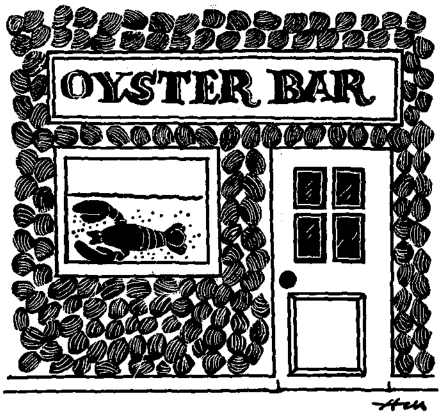
Thus the President put the size and the nature of the Reserve call-up into the hands of the Senate leadership. These men were among Johnson's oldest colleagues and friends. He knew their strengths and weaknesses, and he could calibrate changes in their positions down to the last centimetre. He paid especially close attention to the conservatives and, above all, to the man he respected most among his former Senate colleagues, Richard Russell.

March 8th: General Wheeler and I met with Russell and three of his most influential colleagues: John Stennis, of Mississippi; Henry (Scoop) Jackson, of Washington; and Stuart Symington, of Missouri. A sharply negative tone had replaced the earlier support that these men, with the exception of Symington, had given the war. Russell told me we had made a mistake in getting into Vietnam in the first place, and he did not wish to compound it by calling up the Reserves or extending tours of duty. None wished to support reinforcements for Westmoreland or a large Reserve call-up. Jackson told us we could not proceed without congressional support, and "we won't support you." When I met separately with Mike Mansfield, of Montana, who had succeeded Lyndon Johnson as the Senate Majority Leader and had opposed the war longer than most of his colleagues, he also warned—in his gentle manner—that we had reached the end of the line on increases in American troop levels.

Late that day, we met at the White House to review the negative congressional reaction to the Wheeler-Westmoreland request. Without strong support from the Hill, a large call-up of the Reserves was impossible, and without a major Reserve call-up a large troop increase would be virtually impossible, since, with our other worldwide commitments, the United States had reached the upper limit of what could be sent to Vietnam within the existing force structure. President Johnson immediately realized the implications of the congressional consultations and, for the first time, showed serious doubt about sending more troops to Vietnam. But, to his later regret, he did not make a final decision on how many troops he would send.

March 9th: Wheeler had cabled Westmoreland that there was still "substantial agreement" on an immediate deployment of at least thirty thousand troops. But within hours he sent Westmoreland a new reading of the mood in Washington:

> I must tell you frankly that there is strong resistance from all quarters to putting more ground force units in South Vietnam. The call-up of Reserves and the concomitant actions that must be taken will raise unshirted hell in many influential quarters, and I find that there is substantial sentiment that the 30,000 increment should not be deployed. . . . I tell you this because I feel . . . you should not count upon an affirmative decision for such additional forces.



EXCEPT among those people directly affected, most newspaper articles fade quickly from memory. Only a few stories have any impact on events, and only a few become a part of history itself. On Sunday, March 10, 1968, the *Times* printed such an article. It was later described, with reason, as "the fatal leak." My first warning of what was to come was contained in an urgent note from Assistant Secretary Phil Goulding on the afternoon of March 8th:

> Nick Katzenbach called me this afternoon to say that Neil Sheehan . . . had been calling various State people with the 206,000 figure, but without the detail that [Hedrick] Smith apparently has.

Goulding's note referred to two of the best—and therefore most dangerous—reporters in Washington, Neil Sheehan and Hedrick Smith, both of the *Times*. They were at that moment getting in touch with their sources at the State and Defense Departments to check on the details of a story that they had been working on for several days. I talked to Goulding about the situation, and we agreed that there was nothing we could do to stop them.

The next day was Saturday, and much of official Washington had gathered to enjoy the annual Gridiron Dinner. I was the guest of the great Washington *Post* political cartoonist Herblock. President Johnson, who hated the barbs of the skits at the Gridiron Dinner, did not attend, but Vice-President Hubert Humphrey did, along with most of the Cabinet.

As usual, the evening was long. I was trying to enjoy the jokes aimed at the Administration, but then, sometime around 10 P.M., I was approached by Benjamin Bradlee, the managing editor of the Washington *Post*. He told me that the *Times* was leading its Sunday-morning edition with a story that a huge debate was under way within the Administration over a request from Westmoreland for two hundred and six thousand additional troops. (The *Times* headline, across three columns of the front page, read, "WESTMORELAND REQUESTS 206,000 MORE MEN, STIRRING DEBATE IN ADMINISTRATION.")

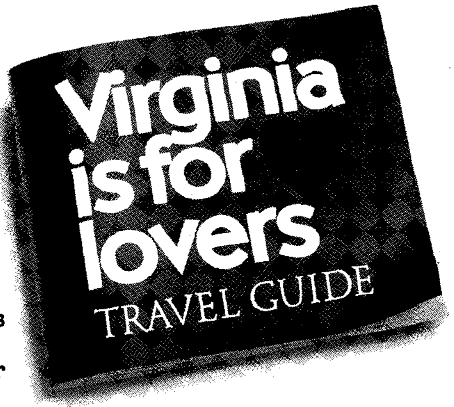
After pressing me for confirmation of the story, Bradlee raced off in search of other Administration officials. I could see Chalmers Roberts, one of his best reporters, buttonholing some as well. George Christian, the President's press secretary, was surrounded by reporters. I watched other editors and publishers, as they heard about the *Times* story, slipping out of the ballroom to call their newsrooms across the country. The normal atmosphere of the Gridiron Dinner—that of a relaxed, off-the-record evening among journalists and government officials—was abandoned. As Hedrick Smith proudly, and accurately, said later, the story moved across the room "like wind through a field of wheat. . . . I could physically see the impact of this story."

Only two days remained before the New Hampshire primary, where Senator Eugene McCarthy, of Minnesota, running against President Johnson on an anti-war platform, was trying to crystallize opposition to the war and the Administration. Because Johnson was not a declared candidate, he was not on the ballot in New Hampshire, but a vigorous write-in campaign was being waged on his behalf by most of the leading Democrats in the state, and until the Tet offensive polls had shown little support for McCarthy.

I discussed the *Times* story with an angry President Johnson over the telephone the next morning. He viewed the story as a personal betrayal of him by someone in the Administration, and was sure it was a civilian in the Pentagon. He asked me to investigate. He also tried to convince himself that he had rejected the Wheeler-Westmoreland troop request the previous week, although in fact he had not. But in his heart the President knew that such details did not matter; the damage was done, and it would be virtually impossible to unsnarl the mess. Finally, President Johnson instructed George Christian to state that "no specific request" from Westmoreland for additional troops had ever reached the President's desk. This might have been correct in the narrowest technical sense, but it fooled no one, and only added to the growing loss of confidence in the Administration.

THE next week was one of non-stop activity. On Monday, March 11th, Dean Rusk began two days of previously scheduled nationally televised testimony on Vietnam before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He performed superbly, showing cool

p. 25: Meet old fiddlers, square dancers and one Hungry Mother.



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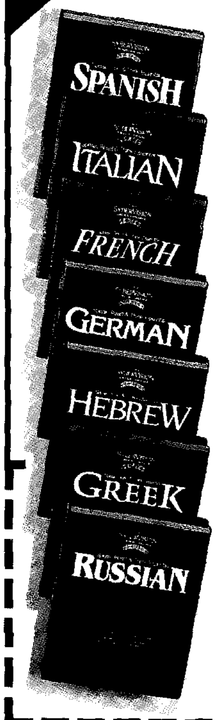

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courage in the face of a heavy barrage of criticism from senators of both parties, and won himself many new admirers. But admiration of Rusk's stoic calm was not convertible into support for the war.

March 12th: As we gathered for the Tuesday Lunch, the citizens of New Hampshire were voting, and Rusk was still testifying before the Foreign Relations Committee. Johnson, low-key and subdued, spoke in an unusually reflective manner about the events of the previous week:

> I was ready [a week ago] to say that we should call up the Reserves, to strengthen the strategic reserve, to ask Congress for authority to call up selected reservists, to use this as a basis for a new position on the tax bill, to ask for authority to extend enlistments. That session last Monday did moderate my judgment some. I do think we should reëvaluate our strategy. I only hope we don't get overrun in the meantime.

That evening, the results came in from New Hampshire, and once again the political ground shifted under our feet. President Johnson's write-in campaign had won the Democratic primary, but by a much narrower margin than anyone had predicted—forty-nine per cent to forty-two per cent for Eugene McCarthy. When the write-in votes that McCarthy had received in the Republican primary were added, he came within a few hundred votes of topping Johnson's total. The results were immediately interpreted as a moral victory for the opponents of the President's policies. New Hampshire resembled the Tet offensive itself: the failure to fulfill excessive expectations had created a serious backlash.

March 13th: The day after New Hampshire, we tried to conduct business as usual. But, for the first time, the President faced the necessity of doing battle to protect his home flank—control of the Democratic Party. Advice poured in from every quarter. Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas sent his old friend in the White House a letter, which the President forwarded to me, urging him to stay "tough and firm, and not to be humble or apologetic," and recommending that we go as far as possible "short of an American invasion of North Vietnam."

I was at home that evening, wondering what could possibly happen next, when, just before midnight, I received a telephone call from Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Without wasting any time, Ted told me that his brother wished to talk to me about Vietnam at my convenience. I replied that I was ready to meet with Bobby whenever and wherever he desired, and a meeting was set for eleven the following morning in my office at the Pentagon.

March 14th: I alerted President Johnson at 7:30 a.m. to Ted's telephone call, and met with him and Fortas in the President's bedroom before my appointment with Bobby Kennedy. The President spent much of our meeting railing against the Kennedys. His distrust and resentment of them had boiled over. Convinced that Bobby was going to seek the nomination, he wanted me to be on guard against any tricks Bobby might try.

I learned later why Bobby had sought me out, despite friction between us during his brother's Presidency. On March 11th, Theodore Sorensen, my old comrade from a legal battle concerning John Kennedy's book "Profiles in Courage," who was now one of Bobby Kennedy's closest advisers, had called on President Johnson to propose "a blue-ribbon commission to review Vietnam policy." During the discussion, Johnson had said, "Clifford is not the hawk that he has been painted to be, and Clifford's critics would be surprised at the positions Clark is taking."

At 11 a.m., Robert Kennedy arrived in my office, accompanied by Sorensen. Both men were very cordial; I responded in the same manner—as though this were simply a meeting between old colleagues and friends, rather than a prelude to a public confrontation of historic importance between the two leading figures in the Democratic Party.

Bobby got right to the point. Having supported the policy in Vietnam as long as he could, he now felt compelled to take action. "One way to correct the policy would be to become a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President," he said. "If elected, I could then change the policy. The other alternative is to find some way to persuade President Johnson to change the policy. Ending the bloodshed in Vietnam is far more important to me than starting a Presidential campaign." Kennedy said he wanted to discuss the idea that Sorensen had already raised with the President: the establishment of a commission to review Vietnam policy. Kennedy stressed that the commission idea was Sorensen's, and not his, but he said that if it was acceptable to the Administration "and its membership signalled a clear-cut willingness to seek a wider path to peace in Vietnam, then my declaration of candidacy would no longer be necessary."

At the time, I did not realize that Sorensen strongly opposed a Kennedy primary challenge to Johnson. The proposal for a commission was central to the strategy that Sorensen was offering his close and cherished friend as an alternative to a lacerating primary campaign against an incumbent President.

"If President Johnson would agree to make a public statement that his policy in Vietnam had proved to be in error," Sorensen said, "and that he was appointing a group of persons to conduct a study in depth of the issues and come up with a recommended course of action, then Senator Kennedy would agree not to enter the race."

I interrupted Sorensen there. "Ted, you know as well as I do that the President could not issue a statement saying that this country's policy was a failure," I said.

Kennedy accepted my point. "The statement does not need to go that far," he said. "If the President would issue a statement that the time had come to reëvaluate, in its entirety, our policy in Vietnam, this language would be sufficient for me, if it was coupled with the appointment of a board consisting of persons recommended by us."

I said that I would have to talk to the President before making a formal reply, but that I wanted to make three personal comments:

> First, it is my opinion that the possibility of your being able to defeat President Johnson for the nomination is zero. I went through a similar situation in 1948 with President Truman when the South was against him, the liberals had deserted him, his domestic and foreign policies were under attack, Henry Wallace was in the race, and leading Democrats were trying to persuade General Eisenhower to run.
>
> Second, I urge you to consider that the situation could change between now and the time of the Convention in August. There are a number of factors under the President's direct control—such as the decision as to when to get negotiations started.

ALICE ENTERING the LOOKING GLASS
ALICE ARRIVING in BRIDGEHAMPTON
Balducci's
Stuart Leeds

> Finally, if by chance you are able to gain the nomination, it will be valueless, because your efforts in displacing President Johnson would so split the Party that the Republican nominee would win the election easily. I hope you consider with the greatest care whether it is worth going through what you will have to endure to gain a nomination which, in my view, would be worthless if you were to win it.

With absolute calm, Kennedy replied that he had considered all those points but still felt that he would have to run unless President Johnson would agree to his proposal. With that, the meeting ended. In an atmosphere that remained polite but was shadowed with a feeling that a confrontation could no longer be prevented, we parted.

At 3:30 P.M., I met with President Johnson, Vice-President Humphrey, and Abe Fortas in the small lounge just off the Oval Office—the room the President used for his most private conversations. His reaction to my report was instantaneous and unequivocal. He could never accept the Kennedy-Sorensen proposal, for several reasons. First, no matter how it was handled, in the eyes of the world it would appear to have been a political deal. Second, it would give comfort to Hanoi. Third, he considered it an attempt to usurp Presidential authority. Fourth, the proposed membership of the commission consisted entirely of men whose opposition to the war was already known—the deck was stacked against the policy.

Humphrey, Fortas, and I agreed with the President. At the President's instruction, I placed a call to Sorensen, who was waiting in Kennedy's Senate office. Ted asked me to hold while he put Bobby on the line. President Johnson listened silently on a line in his office. I told Bobby that, while the President believed in consulting outside advisers, this particular proposal was unacceptable. Bobby asked what the President's reaction would be if he himself were not on the commission. I said that it would make no difference—that from the President's point of view it would still look like a "political deal."

Robert Kennedy said later that this was the precise moment when he made his final decision to run. Observers and friends of the Senator were not so sure; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Kenneth O'Donnell, Fred Dutton, all close friends, and Jack Newfield, who wrote a book on the Kennedy campaign, all said later that they believed that Bobby had never thought the commission idea would work, and had simply gone through the motions to satisfy both himself and Sorensen that he had made every effort to put the issue of Vietnam ahead of his own personal agenda. I was not privy to any of the discussions inside the Kennedy camp, but my impression was that Kennedy knew from the outset that the commission idea, especially in the form in which he had presented it, amounted to an ultimatum to the President and was certain to be rejected. Two days later, on March 16th, Kennedy announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for President. Lyndon Johnson's worst nightmare had come true. He told me that he saw himself trapped forever between the two Kennedys.

I WAS particularly disturbed by the latest version of the President's Vietnam speech, scheduled for March 31st. Drafted by Harry McPherson under direct instructions from the President, it was even tougher than the first draft, and contained phrases like "the American people . . . do not engage in craven retreats from responsibility, whatever the year." I told McPherson that it would only tear the nation further apart. Meanwhile, Rusk cabled Ambassador Bunker, in Saigon, asking for his and President Nguyen Van Thieu's reaction to a full and unilateral bombing halt. Rusk had no hesitation in sharing his own view with Bunker that it "would be our best judgment that they [Hanoi] would not take any real step toward peace."

MARCH 18TH: The President delivered one of the toughest speeches of his Administration, an extemporaneous address before a convention of the National Farmers Union, in Minneapolis. With high emotion, he appealed to the nation:

> Your President has come to ask you people, and all the other people of this nation, to join us in a total national effort to win the war. . . . We will—make no mistake about it—win. . . . We are not doing enough to win it the way we are doing it now.

The speech created an uproar, and reminded me that we were engaged in a tense struggle for the mind and soul of Lyndon Johnson. As I reflected on it, my initial shock turned to dismay: if the President meant those words literally, he and I were much farther apart than I had realized. My God, I thought, after only eighteen days in office am I in such fundamental disagreement with the man who appointed me? I believed I had to try harder to persuade him to my point of view. If I failed, then I would either carry out his policies without public complaint or resign.

I looked for allies in helping to convince the President that he must turn the corner toward deëscalation or disengagement. When I realized the degree to which former Secretary of State Dean Acheson had become disillusioned with the war, it occurred to me that, if it could be presented in the right manner, a shift in the views of some of the other Wise Men, who had given the President strong support in November, 1967, might make an impression on him. I called a few of them and found that they were no longer as confident of their position as they had been then. Of course, I could not be sure what positions the elder statesmen would take after briefings from government officials, but at the Tuesday Lunch on March 19th I suggested that the President reconvene his senior advisory group.

At first, the President reacted negatively to my suggestion. "People would think we were complying with Kennedy's proposal," he said. Unexpectedly, my idea was rescued by Rusk, together with Fortas, who had been invited to the Tuesday Lunch for the first time. Rusk, who respected these men greatly—many of them were close former colleagues—said, "Since you have met with this same group before, it would not appear to be a cave-in to Kennedy." Fortas called it a good "public-relations move." After some further discussion, the President agreed to the meeting, and we decided to convene the group on March 25th, six days before the President's speech to the nation on Vietnam.

At this point, the President still thought of the March 31st speech primarily as a justification for a decision to send Westmoreland more troops and call up the Reserves. There was no mention of a bombing halt in any of the drafts circulating from Harry McPherson's office. Hanging over our heads as the drafting proceeded was the Wisconsin primary, which was to take place only two days after the speech.

I knew that Dean Rusk would support a limited bombing halt but nothing more, and that he was now deeply upset by the idea of sending more troops to Westmoreland. Thus Rusk and I could be temporary and partial allies on two issues, even though a wide gulf continued to separate our motives and objectives.

MARCH 20TH: At 11 A.M., I met with Bui Diem, the South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, who was returning to Saigon for consultations. Fluent in English and knowledgeable regarding American ways, Bui Diem represented his country in Washington with skill, and was adept at playing different Americans off against one another. He was small and wiry, with bright eyes and an ever-present pipe, which gave him an air of wisdom. Believing that an honest warning, even if blunt in tone, was probably the best way to make an impact on Saigon, I said to him:

> Tell your government we have run out of time for diplomatic niceties. We are sick to death of Thieu and Ky [the South Vietnamese Vice-President] endlessly feuding while Americans die. Our people are sick and tired of this war, and our support is limited. Your government is facing a clear decision either to broaden the government, clean up the corruption, and take measures to gain wide support among the people or face the loss of American support. We do not want to send additional forces to Vietnam. If this must be done, it can only be done if our public believes that your forces are doing the best job possible. This is not now the case.
>
> Tell your leadership that Saigon's best friends in Washington are deeply worried as to whether or not the American public will continue its support of our efforts in Vietnam. It is not clear to me that your leaders now understand this. We are losing supporters every day.

Because both the President and Dean Rusk also spoke to him in stern terms before he left for Saigon, Bui Diem said later that he received "the distinct impression that the three of them—Johnson, Rusk, and Clifford—had coördinated their messages." He was wrong. I had not discussed my presentation with the others beforehand. It was so blunt that I withdrew from general circulation all copies of the record of the meeting, and the notetaker, Richard Steadman, told me later that it was the first time he had realized how fully committed I was to trying to extricate us from the war.

FOR SALE
J.Capa

Late in the afternoon, the President called a meeting to discuss his speech. Although the speech was only eleven days away, he had not yet decided how many reinforcements to send to Vietnam, how many Reserves to call up, whether to stop all or part of the bombing of the North, or whether to change our negotiating position. With so many overlapping issues to resolve, it was a chaotic meeting. But, for the first time, we focussed on the bombing. Broadly speaking, three choices were presented to the President:

1. A "hard" approach, opposing any reduction or cessation of the bombing of the North. This was backed by Fortas, Bunker, Rostow, Westmoreland, and the Joint Chiefs.

2. A "soft" approach, a complete and unilateral cessation of the bombing and a reinterpretation of the San Antonio formula. This was supported by Arthur Goldberg, then our Ambassador to the United Nations, and, in the course of the meeting, McGeorge Bundy.

3. Several versions of a middle position that involved cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam except for the area near the DMZ. With some variations, Rusk and I supported this position.

In my heart, I preferred a full bombing halt. But it was clear that the President was not ready to approve a position that was opposed by Rusk, Bunker, Rostow, and the entire military leadership of the United States. Instead of pushing for a full halt, I decided to lock Dean Rusk into support for a limited bombing halt for the time being, and push for a soft-line speech. I would try for a full bombing halt later. Meanwhile, I would also encourage those in the second circle of access to the President, such as Goldberg and McGeorge Bundy, to advocate a full bombing halt. They would serve as a counterbalance to Bunker and the military, who opposed any reductions in the bombing. I explained after the meeting to Paul Warnke, "We have to crawl before we can walk."

The strongest voice for increased military pressure was Abe Fortas, and he was backed by two absent but important parties, Ambassador Bunker and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President had Bunker's telegrams assembled in front of him, and quoted from them often. They contained strong language: the proposal for a full bombing halt would, Bunker said, "create the greatest difficulties for us here"; a limited bombing halt would have all the same negative effects, but it "would be easier to obtain GVN [government] approval" for that. The President quoted these messages, adding, "I think that bombing keeps the lead out of our men's bodies."

"I don't think it's clear that the bombing results in lower American casualties, Mr. President," I replied. "Air power is not proving to be as effective in this war as I once thought."

Fortas objected, his voice rising in intensity. "This is not the time for a major negotiating offer. It will be seen as a sign of weakness. . . . I consider it most unfortunate to make any offers now."

I had to disagree with my old friend, but I tried to do it in an oblique and impersonal manner. "In World War II, 'Prevail we will' worked because conditions were right for it," I said. "Now those conditions do not exist. In Vietnam, continued application of strength and firepower does not show us the road to ultimate success. I don't know if any approach to Hanoi at this time will be accepted. But I am nonetheless for gradual deescalation. Let's try stopping the bombing in the northern part of North Vietnam and see what happens."

The President seemed unmoved by my comments. He closed the meeting with these remarks, addressed to Harry McPherson: "Let's get 'peace' out of the speech except [to say] that we're ready to talk. We are mixing up two different things when we include peace initiatives in this speech. Let's just make it troops and war. . . . Later on we can revive and extend our peace initiative." McPherson, who was convinced that the war was ruining his President, buried his head in his notepad, furiously taking notes, saying nothing.

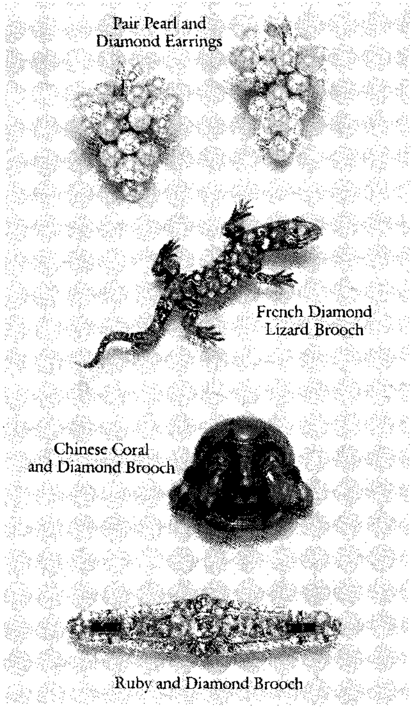
MARCH 22ND: McPherson had sent out a new draft of the speech; still very tough in tone, it warned of a "grave challenge to our country" that we must "see through." It called for a surtax and reduced domestic spending to achieve our goal: "We have set our face against the enemy, and he will fail." We reconvened in the family quarters of the White House for a long luncheon to discuss this draft.

I suggested that we reopen discussion on the idea of a bombing halt north of the 20th Parallel. Someone had to break the logjam, and we should consider taking the first deëscalatory step. Rusk agreed with me, but added that he still thought Hanoi would not respond, and we would then be able to resume the bombing. Bill Bundy, citing Ambassador Bunker, said that my suggestion would cause major problems in Saigon, and Fortas flatly opposed my view. McGeorge Bundy closed the discussion by predicting that my proposal "would have a short life, but I am not against it."

Immediately after the meeting, the President announced that General Westmoreland would be reassigned to the Pentagon as Chief of Staff of the Army, effective July 2nd, replacing General Harold K. Johnson. McNamara had recommended the reassignment of Westmoreland before the Tet offensive, but the delay in the announcement inevitably left the impression that Westmoreland had been relieved because of Tet. Concerned that Westmoreland needed to be talked to privately about both his reassignment and the question of reinforcements, I suggested that we send General Wheeler to the Pacific for a quick meeting with him.

Wheeler left the next day, met with Westmoreland for a few hours at Clark Air Base, in the Philippines, and returned home immediately for the final week of discussions on the March 31st speech, bringing with him Westmoreland's deputy, General Creighton Abrams, who was the leading candidate to assume the command in Vietnam. Wheeler also brought back a request from Westmoreland for thirteen thousand five hundred additional troops for Vietnam. As soon as Wheeler told me that Westmoreland would be satisfied with this relatively small increase, I decided to support it, while trying to insure that it would be the last increase ever in American forces in Vietnam.

HISTORIANS and journalists have made much of the gathering of the Senior Advisory Group—the Wise Men—on March 25-26, 1968: in the words of Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, in their book "The Wise



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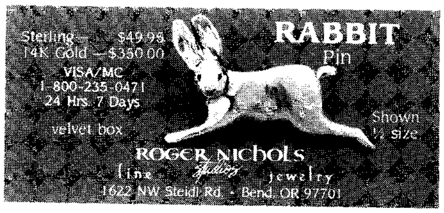

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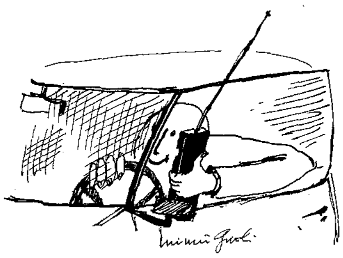
Men," it was "possibly the most distinguished dinner party of the American Establishment ever held" and "the high-water mark of U.S. hegemony." The scene has become a dramatic part of the history of our times; the elder statesmen of the "Cold War Knighthood" proudly carrying their years and experience into one last meeting with a President in crisis.

It was, in fact, an unhappy occasion; there could be no pleasure in taking part in an event that required its participants to admit that their previous advice had been wrong, and that the President must change course, no matter what the consequences.



They began arriving at the State Department in the late afternoon of Monday, March 25th. Some settled down to read background papers prepared by State and Defense; others talked privately to Katzenbach, former Ambassador Averell Harriman, Bill Bundy, or Habib. Former Under-Secretary of State George Ball spent part of the afternoon with Katzenbach, while Cyrus Vance, the former Deputy Secretary of Defense, talked to some of his old colleagues in the Pentagon. Acheson dropped into Katzenbach's office late in the afternoon for a last chat. At 6 P.M., we gathered in the Secretary's Dining Room, on the eighth floor of the State Department—a fairly small room, a few yards from the large State Dining Room.

As we sat around the dining-room table, the outside advisers questioned Rusk, Helms, Katzenbach, Bill Bundy, and me extensively. I told the group that there were three choices open to the United States: (1) granting Westmoreland a major troop increase, increasing the bombing of the North, and extending the ground war into Laos, Cambodia, and perhaps the lower part of North Vietnam; (2) "muddling along" with roughly our present strategy, perhaps giving Westmoreland a few thousand more troops; and (3) a "reduced strategy," consisting of a bombing halt or a reduction in the bombing of the North, the abandonment of isolated military positions, and a new strategy that used American ground troops as a shield around populated areas in order to give the South Vietnamese government time to assume the burden of the war. I said that although I was willing to send Westmoreland a small number of additional troops, I preferred the third course.

After dinner, we took the Secretary's private elevator down one floor and walked a few steps to the Operations Center, which was the State Department's nerve center. It had been set up during the Kennedy Administration, providing the State Department with a capability it had never had before: a space manned twenty-four hours a day to deal with crises. Maps were set up for the Wise Men to examine, and then we settled down to hear briefings from Habib; Major General William E. DePuy, who had commanded troops in Vietnam and was special assistant to the Joint Chiefs for counter-insurgency and special activities; and the C.I.A.'s chief analyst for Vietnam, George Carver.

Like almost everything that happened in the month of March, these three briefings later gave rise to a heated debate. President Johnson, Rostow, Taylor, and the military all felt that they had been betrayed by the briefings, if not necessarily by the briefers. Rusk said the briefings had been unbalanced and too pessimistic. Maxwell Taylor told the President they had been significantly different from the situation as he understood it. Wheeler, who had not attended the dinner, because he was exhausted from his trip to the Philippines, said that the briefers had not understood the true situation. Rostow told people, "I smelled a rat."

The criticisms are unfair. The briefings came from three career government officials who had substantial firsthand experience in Vietnam, and who had been chosen personally by Rusk, Wheeler, and Helms for the assignment. Habib, DePuy, and Carver had all presented their honest views. However, the impact of the briefings on the Wise Men, who in the five months since their last meeting had not been following events in Vietnam except through the media, was undoubtedly much greater than it was on those inside the government, who could see that the mood was less grim than it had been at the height of Tet.

General DePuy portrayed the Tet offensive as an allied victory, but his presentation was diminished by a telling exchange he had with Arthur Goldberg after saying that the Communists had lost eighty thousand men in action. "What is the normal ratio of wounded to killed?" Goldberg asked. A three-to-one ratio among the Vietnamese would be a conservative estimate, DePuy answered. "How many 'effectives' "—regular soldiers—"do you think they now have?" Goldberg asked then. Perhaps two hundred and thirty thousand, maybe two hundred and forty thousand, said DePuy. "Well, with eighty thousand killed and a wounded ratio of three to one, that makes about three hundred and twenty thousand men killed or wounded," Goldberg said, and he asked, "Who the hell is there left for us to be fighting?"

The C.I.A. briefer, George Carver, who was a frequent briefer of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and was a supporter of the war, presented a candid view of the difficulties involved, particularly in the pacification campaign, and said that it would take much longer than he had previously estimated to achieve our objectives—hardly a controversial conclusion by late March.

The most important briefing came from Phil Habib, who had already met secretly with Acheson several times to prepare him for the meetings. He presented a bleak but balanced picture of a South Vietnamese government unlikely to pull itself together within any reasonable amount of time, and guessed that it might take anywhere from five to seven years to achieve any lasting progress. His blunt and at times earthy Brooklyn style gave his words great credibility. With Habib, the elders could feel that they were getting hard facts and honest opinions.

When Habib had finished, I asked, "Phil, do you think a military victory can be won?"

Habib knew that to answer such a basic question in front of his three immediate superiors—Rusk, Katzenbach, and Bill Bundy—put him in an exceedingly difficult position, but he was, above all, honest. After hesitating for just a moment, he replied, "Not under present circumstances."

I asked him one more question. He told me later that it was the toughest moment of his career. "What would you do if the decision were yours to make?"

Another brief hesitation. Then Habib replied, "Stop the bombing and negotiate."

It was after 11 P.M. when the meeting broke up. The advisers retired to their homes or their hotel rooms to contemplate what they would tell the President the next day. I went back to my office at the Pentagon, where I worked for a while longer, and spent the night. It was clear from the comments of the Wise Men that the majority of them had shifted their positions since November, but I was not yet certain how they would convey this shift to the President or what impact it would have on him.

I was especially gratified by the apparent shift of Cyrus Vance. President Johnson had great affection and respect for Vance, and would surely listen to him carefully. Discreet and utterly loyal to the President, whom he had known since the nineteen-fifties, he had listened intently during the evening session, taken careful notes, and asked only a few questions. But his comments, although they were guarded, convinced me that he would be part of the consensus against escalation. Since Vance had left the Administration, in June, 1967, because of a serious back problem, Johnson had asked him to undertake several difficult trouble-shooting missions, in Cyprus and Korea, and —under conditions of personal risk— in Detroit during the racial disturbances in the summer of 1967. In each of these crises, he had performed with distinction, precision, and real courage. During that time, he was in such pain from his back that he could not bend down far enough to tie his shoelaces without help, yet he had accepted such difficult assignments without complaint, asking only that his wife, Gay, be allowed to travel with him.

In the morning, I shuttled between another meeting of the Wise Men at the State Department and a briefing of the President and Rusk by Generals Wheeler and Abrams at the White House. I was particularly interested in getting a sense of Abrams. I found him an entirely different sort of man from either Westmoreland or Wheeler. Shorter, heavier, and less telegenic than Westmoreland, Creighton Abrams conveyed the strength of the Second World War tank commander he had been—Patton's favorite tank commander, according to legend. There was nothing fancy about Abe, as everybody called him; he was blunt and reassuring where Westmoreland was dramatic and Wheeler was cautious. He did not give off the scent of political ambition, like Westmoreland, who was talked about as a possible Presidential candidate and later ran, unsuccessfully, for governor of South Carolina.

Wheeler and Abrams gave the President a far more optimistic picture of the situation than the Wise Men had heard at dinner the previous night. Perhaps encouraged by a reduced level of fighting in Vietnam and by Abrams' positive personality, Wheeler had regained much of his confidence. He said that Westmoreland still feared a "tactical defeat" if he did not receive adequate reserves, but that he and Westmoreland no longer worried about a general defeat.

Abrams put heavy emphasis on intelligence reports that showed large-scale infiltration from the North, partly to replace the losses of Tet. For Wheeler and Abrams, there was only one answer to the increase in enemy strength: more American troops, an increase in the bombing, and an expansion of the ground war into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. Coming from a military tradition, they did not realize that in the eyes of most members of Congress and most civilians in the executive branch the reports of North Vietnamese infiltration only strengthened the argument for seeking an alternative to what appeared to be endless escalation.

Impressed by Abrams, the President asked him and Wheeler to stay on to meet the Wise Men. He told Abrams to offer them "the whole picture, pros and cons," to counter what he said he had heard had been a "depressing" briefing by the C.I.A. representative the night before on the low morale of the South Vietnamese Army. "The civilians are cutting our guts out," he said.

Rusk broke in to say, "The nation can't support a bottomless pit."

In response, President Johnson launched into a remarkable and painfully sad speech about his own difficulties. It almost seemed at times as if he were pleading for understanding, even forgiveness, from these two military officers, to whom he could no longer send reinforcements:

> What will happen if we cut housing, education, poverty programs? I don't give a damn about the election. I will be happy just to keep doing what is right and lose the election. There has been a panic in the last three weeks. . . . Warnke writes a paper for Clifford's group, and it's all over Georgetown. . . . I will have overwhelming disapproval in the polls. I will go down the drain. Goldberg wants us not to bomb North Vietnam for three weeks. Secretary Clifford had a plan to stop above the 20th Parallel. We must have something. . . . Senators McCarthy and Kennedy and the left wing have informants in the State and Defense Departments.
>
> How can we get this job done? We need more money—in an election year. We need more taxes—in an election year. We need more troops—in an election year. And we need cuts in the domestic budget—in an election year. And yet I cannot tell the people what they will get in Vietnam in return for these cuts. We have no support for the war. This was caused by the 206,000-man request and the leaks, by Teddy Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy. I would have given Westy the 206,000 men if he said he needed them, and if we could get them.

There was nothing to say after this outburst. I felt immensely sorry for the President. None of the choices he faced were attractive. But his comments suggested to me that he understood the need for a dramatic change in policy.

Shortly after one o'clock, the Wise Men arrived from the State Department. During luncheon, Wheeler and Abrams emphasized the substantial improvement in the situation since February. But the group of elders did not bother to question the two generals closely. To a considerable degree, they had lost confidence in official assessments from the military. Besides, few of the Wise Men were thinking solely of Vietnam anymore; their eyes were fixed on disengagement now, not on victory. After the plates were cleared, the President asked McGeorge Bundy to summarize the group's views. Bundy began with a blunt statement that seemed to shock the President:

> Mr. President, there has been a very significant shift in most of our positions since we last met. The picture in Novem-

> ber was one of hope for reasonably steady, slow but sustained, progress, especially in the countryside, which was then emphasized to us as an area of particular importance. The picture that emerged from the discussions last night was not so hopeful, particularly in the countryside. Dean Acheson summed up the majority feeling when he said that we can no longer do the job we set out to do in the time we have left, and we must begin to take steps to disengage. That view was shared by George Ball, Arthur Dean, Cy Vance, Douglas Dillon, and myself.... Four of us took a different position: General [Omar] Bradley, General Taylor, Bob Murphy, and Justice Fortas. They all feel we should not act to weaken our position, and should do what our military commanders suggest.... On the question of troop reinforcements the dominant sentiment was that the burden of proof rests with those who are urging the increase. Most of us think that there should not be a substantial escalation, nor an extension of the conflict. This would be against our national interest.

Almost wearily, the President asked for other comments. Acheson said he agreed with Bundy's summation, and added, "We should do something different no later than the summer." As Acheson spoke of the impossibility of achieving a military victory, Wheeler tried to correct him. We were not seeking a military victory in Vietnam, only helping the Vietnamese avoid a Communist victory, he said. This infuriated Acheson, and he answered with a flash of his old style: "Then what in the name of God are five hundred thousand men out there doing—chasing girls? This is not a semantic game, General. If the deployment of all those men is not an effort to gain a military solution, then words have lost all meaning."

One by one, the others spoke their piece. Henry Cabot Lodge, the former Ambassador to South Vietnam, advocated a new strategy that would lower American casualties as quickly as possible. Douglas Dillon, the former Secretary of the Treasury and Ambassador to France, supported both Lodge and Acheson, while Ball urged a complete bombing halt quickly. As I had hoped, Cy Vance said he agreed with Ball.

General Bradley, as crusty and blunt as ever, supported the military, but with significant qualifications, which were not lost on any of us: he would send only support troops to Vietnam at this time, and for the first time he expressed willingness to see the bombing stopped, if only as a "temporary" action that might shore up domestic support for the war.

Deeply alarmed, General Taylor tried to stop the trend of the discussion. "I am dismayed by what I have heard," he said. "The picture some of these gentlemen have in their minds is not the one that I have developed over a long period of time. Let's not concede the home front; let's do something about it."

Robert Murphy, the former diplomat, who had almost resigned in protest in 1948 when President Truman refused to send an armored column through the Berlin blockade, said that, while he was "shaken by the positions of my associates," he still supported the military.

Fortas agreed with Murphy and Taylor, opposing, as he always had, any reduction in the bombing of the North. "I do not believe in drama for drama's sake," he said.

Douglas Dillon and Arthur Dean, our former Korean War negotiator, both noted the difference between Wheeler and Abrams, on the one hand, and General DePuy, on the other. "Mr. President, all of us got the impression last night, listening to General DePuy, Mr. Carver, and Mr. Habib, that there is no military conclusion in this war—or any military end in the near future," Dean said. "I think all of us here very reluctantly came to the judgment that we've got to get out, and we only came to it after we listened to the briefing last night." There were murmurs of assent from around the table.

This disturbed the President greatly. He tried to make a joke—"The first thing I am going to do when you all leave is to find those people who briefed you last night"—but a few moments later he passed a piece of paper to me on which he had scrawled, "Clark, could you and Dean come in a moment?" Then he rose, told the Wise Men he would be back shortly, and left the room, trailed by Rusk and me.

As soon as we were outside the Cabinet Room, the President turned to us angrily and demanded, "Who poisoned the well with these guys? I want to hear those briefings myself." Then, saying that he wanted to continue the meeting with no government officials present, he told us to go back to our offices.

I returned to the Pentagon tired but relieved. The impact on the President had been visible; I felt that Vance's change of views had particularly surprised him. Later, I learned from Cy that in fact he had harbored serious doubts about the war for almost two years but had shared them only with McNamara. Contrary to the conclusion most historians reached later, the President had known for almost two weeks that Acheson had started to change his views, and was thus less surprised by his shift than has generally been assumed. But speaking almost ex officio for the foreign-policy establishment, and with his customary authority, Acheson had an unquestionable impact on the President. Still, almost half the participants in the meeting had given the military full or partial support, so it was hardly the unanimous

TREES

So greatly that I hardly see them, trees
Intimidate. (I know the names of flowers,
Not of trees.)

Exceedingly over my head, standing so forthright
They are no one person's
Birthright,

Trees loom or lift and are not shaken by showers
To bend and patronize me,
As I do flowers.

Having enough to raise without raising objections,
They war only within themselves,
Their sections

Dipping to each other like professors at a meeting.
This is their only breach of the peace
And greeting.

—JONATHAN BRACKER

• •

turnaround that later became part of the mythology of the Vietnam War.

The President heard from two of the briefers, DePuy and Carver, the next day. Habib deliberately went ahead with a previously scheduled speech in Dayton, Ohio, thus avoiding the meeting with the President. I did not sit in on the repeat performances of DePuy and Carver, but the President pronounced himself satisfied that the well-poisoning had not come from them. In any event, the debate over the briefings was academic: the Wise Men were no longer focussed on the war in Vietnam. I believe that even if they had been briefed by Westmoreland, Wheeler, and Bunker themselves, they would have reached the same conclusions, for one fundamental reason: even the strongest supporters of the war could no longer offer any credible timetable for American withdrawal or a successful outcome. The men who had helped lay down the basic line of resistance to the expansion of Communism in the world, the statesmen responsible for the moves in Berlin and Korea, had decided that they had had enough in Vietnam. The price was not commensurate with the goal.

It was not true, as was later charged by critics on the right, including Rostow, that this was the evening that the American establishment came to an end. On the contrary, the men in the room were still strong supporters of policies to contain the Soviet Union and China, and almost half of them still supported the military; opposition to the war was based solely on the belief that Vietnam was weakening us at home and in the rest of the world. And they were right.

IN just a few weeks, Harry McPherson had become one of my most deeply trusted associates—virtually the only man on the White House staff with whom I could talk freely. Urging him to look for opportunities to reshape the March 31st speech from its dreadful early drafts, I suggested that we work together closely in the coming days. "We must be watchful for any sign that the war is to be wound up, and not down," I said. "That would be tragic—for the country, and for the man himself."

We needed to turn the speech around. The latest draft was still a hard-line defense of the war: "Our will is being challenged. . . . We shall not quit. . . . I ask you now to support the new efforts I have described this evening . . . with determination to see this conflict through." It did not mention a bombing halt, partial or complete, and had a tone of belligerence I was certain would cause nothing but difficulties for the President and the nation. On March 27th, I sent McPherson a detailed set of suggested changes, and added a general comment:

> From a deëscalation standpoint, it still offers nothing. From a negotiating standpoint, it still offers nothing. The speech still locks us into a war that is pictured as being essential to our security but is not proven as being essential to our security. It offers nothing—neither hope nor plan for either victory or negotiated settlement.

Harry agreed with my reaction, but he said he was following guidance from the President and Rostow.

MARCH 28TH: Only three days remained before the speech. We met in Rusk's office at 11 A.M. for what I knew in advance would be the most critical speech-drafting session. I was beginning to despair; even the growing support for a limited bombing halt did not cheer me up, since I felt that such a step, if it was part of a hard-line speech, would look like another public-relations gimmick. The President had been shaken by the Wise Men, but he had not indicated any change in position. McPherson and I agreed to make an all-out effort to soften the speech and turn it around. I prepared for what I expected would be a contentious showdown with Rusk and Rostow. It never came.

I began the meeting by stating my strong belief that the draft we were discussing was "warlike" and, if it was delivered, would constitute a disaster of the first magnitude for the President and the nation. Speaking directly to Rusk, I continued:

> I have a fundamental problem with this speech. It is still about war. What the President needs is a speech about peace. We must change it. We must take the first step toward winding down the war and reducing the level of violence. . . . I believe the first step should be an announcement that we have unilaterally restricted our bombing of the North to the area north of the DMZ. Not that we have paused, but that we have *stopped* bombing north of the 20th Parallel. If there is a favorable response from the other side, we should be prepared to take other steps.

To my amazement, neither Rusk nor Rostow fought back, as they had in so many previous meetings. At the same time, neither man said he agreed to

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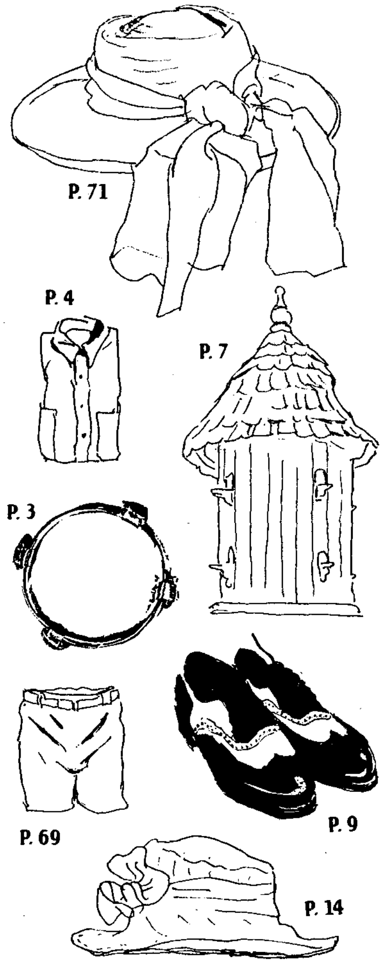

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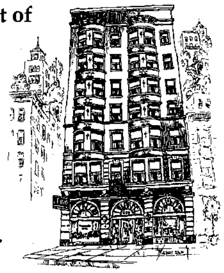

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make the fundamental changes I had proposed. Instead, we began a calm and methodical discussion of what the President should accomplish with the speech. The hard-line draft lay ignored on the table. Rusk suggested that we continue the discussion over luncheon in his dining room. As we ate, I looked for a way to move forward without forcing Rusk to take a clear-cut position. Finally, I had an idea: let McPherson draft a substitute, softer speech, and let the President choose between the two. Rusk agreed; Rostow said nothing. Rusk suggested language on a partial bombing halt for the new version of the speech, and I agreed to it immediately. He then asked Bill Bundy to prepare a message to Ellsworth Bunker informing him that we were considering a partial bombing halt, and instructing him to obtain President Thieu's agreement, if that was necessary. It seemed clear that Rusk preferred the softer draft, although he refrained from saying so.

The alternative draft that McPherson prepared had an entirely different tone from the previous drafts. This change was clear from the very first sentence, which, at my suggestion, was changed from "I speak to you tonight in a time of grave challenge to our country" to "Tonight I want to speak to you of the prospects for peace in Vietnam and Southeast Asia." McPherson worked late into the evening on the new draft, and sent it to the President around ten o'clock. Rusk had met alone with the President for a few minutes at around eight, and told him we had decided to offer him an alternate draft, which we both preferred. We waited to see which version of the speech President Johnson would choose.

The next morning, shortly after ten o'clock, President Johnson called McPherson to discuss changes in the draft. As Harry began looking through the old draft for the places where the President wanted to make changes, he suddenly realized that the President was working from the alternate draft. He suppressed his excitement and took the President's changes down, one by one. But as soon as their conversation was over he called me. "We've won," he almost shouted. "The President is working from our draft."

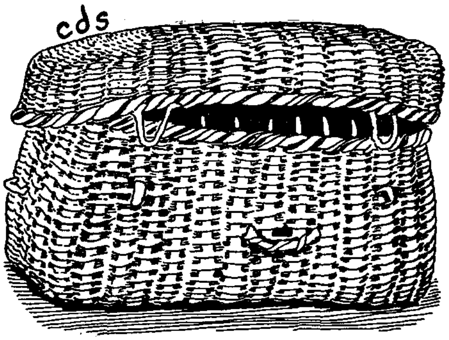
I was truly moved. The "turn toward peace" for which we had fought for a month had been accepted. But there was still work to be done. I realized that as soon as I read Bill Bundy's telegram to Ambassador Bunker, instructing him to inform President Thieu of the new policy in the most negative way possible:

> You should make clear that Hanoi is most likely to denounce the project and thus free our hand after a short period. . . . In view of weather limitations, bombing north of the 20th Parallel will in any event be limited at least for the next four weeks or so—which we tentatively envisage as a maximum testing period in any event. Hence, we are not giving up anything serious in this time frame. . . . Insofar as our announcement foreshadows any possibility of a complete bombing stoppage in the event Hanoi really exercises reciprocal restraints, we regard this as unlikely.

I was not happy with this language. It showed clearly that between State and me a large disagreement still existed, only temporarily submerged. But this was obviously not the moment or the issue on which to start an argument with the State Department.

March 30th: "Victory" in these circumstances is a comparative and temporary event. Several contentious issues arose during a lengthy speech review with the President, which lasted all afternoon and into the evening. In shirtsleeves and looking tired, the President sat at the Cabinet table, hunched over his copy of the draft, reviewing every word. Around him were all his senior advisers except Rusk, who had left for New Zealand to attend the annual meeting of ANZUS Foreign Ministers. Acting Secretary of State Katzenbach urged that the specific reference to the 20th Parallel be replaced by language stating that the bombing would end in North Vietnam "except in the area north of the Demilitarized Zone, where the continuing enemy buildup directly threatens allied forward positions." Katzenbach's proposal, which we all accepted, caused a problem for us within twenty-four hours of the delivery of the speech.

As the meeting was breaking up, the President asked McPherson why there was no ending to the speech. "I cut it out," Harry replied. "It was too long, and it doesn't fit the speech anymore. I'll write a new ending—one that won't be so long."



"Go ahead, but don't worry about the length of it," the President said, with a knowing smile, as he headed out the door. "I may have a little ending of my own."

Harry turned to me with an astonished look on his face. "Jesus, is he going to say sayonara?" For a few moments, I did not understand what McPherson meant.

"Is he going to say goodbye tomorrow night?" Harry asked again. I looked at him, McPherson recalled later, "with pity, as if I were too tired to be rational."

Shortly before 10 P.M., McPherson handed the President a draft closing statement. He attached to it a note conveying my views, complete with a teasing attempt to capture in print my methodical speech pattern:

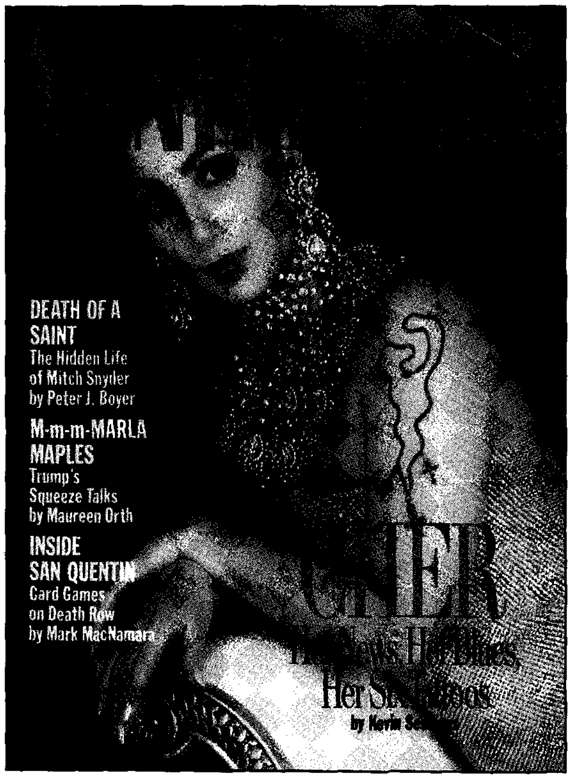
> Here is a closing peroration. It does not light up the sky with rockets. Clark Clifford feels strongly—I - would - say - vi - o - lent - ly—that it should *not* light up the sky. He argues that if you come on with a strong "we must resist aggression" line at the end of a peaceful initiative speech, people will say, "ah—now here comes the *real* Johnson, Old Blood and Thunder"; and that the purpose of the speech will be lost. I agree with him.

Sunday, March 31st, began as the first relaxed day I had enjoyed since taking office, a month earlier. The preparations for the speech were finally ended. The weather was mild and the sky overcast, but since it did not rain I played golf for the first time in weeks, thinking as I played about the next steps in moving the President toward deëscalation.

Around 5 P.M., the President called and asked if Marny and I would come to the White House before the speech and stay for dinner afterward. We arrived at the White House shortly after eight and waited for a few minutes in the upstairs sitting room with the Rostows. We made the very smallest of small talk; after the previous month, Walt and I were guarded in our conversation with each other. President Johnson did not come out to greet us, however; instead, he asked his Army sergeant to bring me into the bedroom.

The President was sitting and put-

SHOWTIME!



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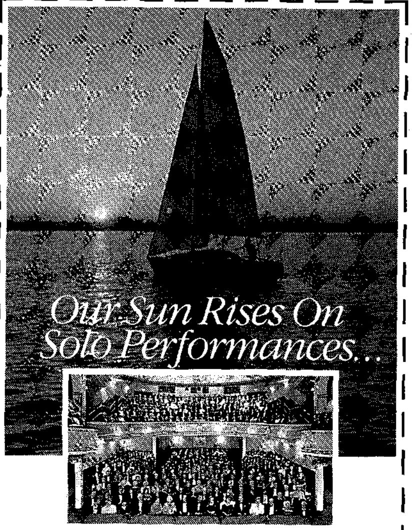
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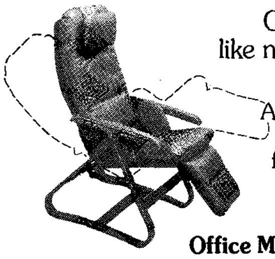
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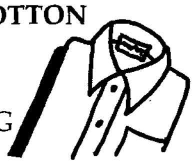
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ting on a tie as I entered. He looked up, handed me a sheet of paper, and said, "I'd like you to read this. It is the ending to my speech. You have not seen it before."

Nothing in my professional career has ever surprised me as much as what I read:

> I have concluded that I should not permit the Presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year.... Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President.

After a few moments, I looked at Johnson and said, "You've made up your mind?"

"Yes," he said, "I've made up my mind. Totally."

"I understand your decision, Mr. President," I said. "But that does not keep me from deeply regretting it. If this is your decision, then it becomes my decision. God bless you. I am very sorry." He rose, and I shook his hand solemnly.

As I left, Walt Rostow came in, for the same private moment with the President. I rejoined the wives and told them the news. Tears came to Marny's eyes.

About a quarter to nine, we gathered, burdened and subdued by the knowledge of a great secret about to become public, and made our way, almost like a funeral procession, toward the Oval Office. The President and his daughters led, followed by three aides —Jim Jones, Marvin Watson, and Walt Rostow. I walked slightly behind them with Lady Bird and Marny. When I reached the office of President Johnson's private secretary, Marie Fehmer, I stopped to watch the speech on her small television set. I was still having trouble believing what I was hearing—but, then, so was the rest of the nation.

When the President finished his speech, he wandered around the White House talking to people and viewing, with evident pleasure, the astonishment of the television commentators. After he took a few telephone calls from friends, he and I walked back to the family quarters together. "I never felt so right about any decision in my life," he said. A certain energy I had not seen in the past month had returned to the President; he had—for the moment, at least—regained the initiative and surprised the world.

As we talked, the President changed into a blue turtleneck shirt. Then we returned to the West Hall, where he joined the Rostows and a few other friends. At 11 P.M., he held a brief press conference, stressing the irreversibility of his decision. Then he rejoined us, making more calls and talking animatedly to everyone within sight. On a chair in one corner of the room, Lady Bird sat quietly, eating dinner. Walt Rostow knelt at her side, talking softly with her.

"I was never surer of any decision I ever made in my life," the President said again. "And I never made any more unselfish one. I have five hundred and twenty-five thousand men whose very lives depend on what I do, and I can't afford to worry about the primaries. Now I will be working full time for those men out there. The only guys that won't be back here by the time my term ends are the guys that are left in the last day or two."

The President had talked to me on one or two occasions about not running again in 1968. I knew he had had similar discussions with many other people, including one with Harry McPherson and Joseph Califano only a few weeks earlier. But even those who had helped him prepare the text of the withdrawal announcement, George Christian and Horace Busby, were not certain he would use it—not until he actually read it on television. Little wonder, then, that men like McPherson, Califano, and me had not believed President Johnson when he talked about giving up the job he had sought almost his entire life. We had thought that he was simply reflecting his agony over the pressures and the stress he was under.

I doubt whether his intention to withdraw was firm in the late fall of 1967, when he discussed the issue with Westmoreland, or in January, 1968, when he almost announced it during the State of the Union address. He was undoubtedly considering it seriously then, even moving toward it, but he was still torn. Even as he was talking to some close advisers about withdrawing, he was involved with others in actively planning the 1968 campaign. He spent time with key advisers and fund-raisers like Arthur Krim to discuss the details of the race. He persuaded Charles Murphy, who had succeeded me as special counsel in the Truman White House, to resign as chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board in order to become a special assistant at the White House working entirely on the 1968 campaign. And on the afternoon of the speech, I learned later, some of his family tried to talk him out of his decision at the last moment.

Once I had recovered from my shock, I remembered a Presidential request in the fall of 1967 that I should have paid more attention to. During a private talk one evening, President Johnson had asked me to assemble information concerning President Truman's decision not to run for reëlection in 1952. "I may do the same thing as Truman," President Johnson had said, rather casually. I had prepared the memorandum for him, but I did not take seriously the possibility that he might not run in 1968. President Truman, a genuinely modest man, had renounced power with hardly a second thought. I could not then imagine Lyndon Johnson doing the same thing. But that was before Tet.

Now, reflecting on the stunning event I had just witnessed, I felt that the President had made the correct decision. If he had run, he would have been fully occupied in the fight for the nomination; if he had won that, reëlection after such a bitter internal fight would have been tough. In these unusual circumstances, it would have been difficult for him to campaign and carry out his duties as President. His withdrawal cut the Gordian knot into which American politics in 1968 had been twisted; his sacrifice was a service to the nation. But when I had time to reflect on the sequence of events I had two deep regrets.

1. If he had really always intended to withdraw, as he told everyone, I wished he had done so earlier. By pulling out before his support in the polls collapsed, he would have avoided a general impression that he was driven from office by the Tet offensive and Bobby Kennedy's entry into the race. Furthermore, by announcing his withdrawal and the partial bombing halt in the same speech, he made inevitable the conclusion that the two actions were caused by the same event—the Tet offensive. If he had made the two announcements in different speeches, it would have reduced the impression that his political career had been ended by Hanoi, and perhaps strengthened him for the remainder of his term.

2. More fundamentally, I felt that the President had made a grievous error and hurt himself greatly by his decision to withhold from his closest advisers on the speech and on Vietnam policy the fact that he was not going to run. We thought we were drafting a speech for an embattled candidate, not a man ready, in his own eyes, to sacrifice his career in pursuit of peace. We were at all times mindful of the fact that the critical primary in Wisconsin would take place two days after the speech. If I had known that the President would be a lame duck with ten months left in office, I would have argued for a full bombing cessation, despite the difficulty of gaining Presidential approval. A limited bombing halt, designed for another political scenario, would probably not result in serious negotiations with Hanoi; a full bombing halt might. With less than ten months left in his term, the President would need every day he had left in office to try to settle the war. As time passed, the President's political power would inevitably diminish. I thought it possible that Rusk, who learned of the President's decision just before his departure for New Zealand—too late to take it into account in our deliberations—might have joined me in an effort to halt the bombing completely, if only on a trial basis. And if Rusk and I had joined forces the President might have agreed.

Why did the President not tell Rusk and me earlier, when he discussed the subject with several friends and political advisers? Perhaps it was because he believed he had dropped enough hints so that we had been forewarned. Perhaps it was because he was uncertain himself until the last minute, or because he feared a leak, or because he enjoyed surprising everyone. But, whatever the reason, we worked on the most important speech of the Johnson Presidency ignorant of information that would have changed the positions of at least some of us, and perhaps affected the President's decision on the bombing.

—CLARK CLIFFORD
WITH RICHARD HOLBROOKE

(*This is the second part of a three-part article.*)

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THE THEATRE

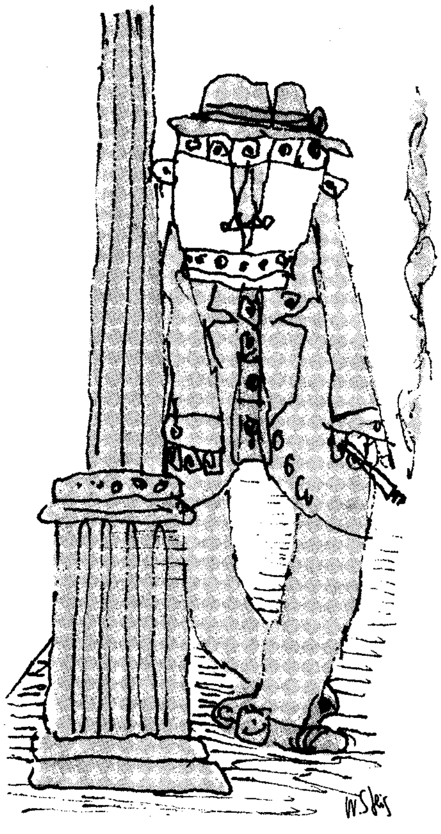
Folly

"The Will Rogers Follies," at the Palace, gratifies the American eye but tends to gyp the American ear (and funny bone). Actually, it *is* witty, but much of the wit lies in Tony Walton's settings, lighted by Jules Fisher; Willa Kim's costumes; and Tommy Tune's direction and choreography. "The Will Rogers Follies: A Life in Revue" is the full title, and the action goes back and forth between the Ziegfeld Follies stage and biographical episodes: scenes on Rogers' father's ranch; at the St. Louis Exposition; on a station platform, during Rogers' vaudeville days; at his wedding; at a political convention; in Hollywood. Keith Carradine, swinging his lariat, doubles all the while as participant and monologuist. The show could well be the most elaborate facsimile ever to open on Broadway, the title character being an imitation of a star.

Mr. Carradine is a personable, humorous actor and singer, with a pleasing voice and an appealing demeanor. His impersonation of Rogers may, for all I know, catch the style of the original, whom I must have seen in a movie or heard on the radio, but I doubt whether the original was quite so modest. In any case, the real Ziegfeld would not have required the real Rogers to play solo. From all accounts, he would have surrounded his star with other stars—with Fanny Brice and W. C. Fields, say—to create a galaxy. As it stands, this "Follies" is as much spectacle as show, what with the stunning contributions of Mr. Tune, Mr. Walton, and Miss Kim, and with a pleasing score by Cy Coleman, orchestrated by Billy Byers, and with nimble lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green—the names make a theatrical roll of honor—but it's a spectacle that is hollow at the core. If only the imagination (and money) had gone into booking, say, Bill Irwin and Penn & Teller along with Mr. Tune's dancers, it could have been a show to gratify Florenz Ziegfeld.

The monologue, much of it doubtless Rogers' own material, is often funny, but it gets too uplifty toward the end and even includes a gratuitous crack about smoking. Throughout the action, Wiley Post (Paul Ukena, Jr.), with whom Rogers died in a plane crash, sits in a box at stage left, becoming more and more ominous as time goes by. The chorus of Ziegfeld Girls —row upon row of them, in one formulation after another, up and down stairs that seem to reach to the heavens —is as decorative as is required, and Cady Huffman, as Mr. Ziegfeld's "favorite," is a delight. Dee Hoty is O. K. as Betty Blake, who becomes Rogers' wife, and so is Dick Latessa, as his father. As for Vince Bruce, the Roper (with his magic lariat), I wish his act had gone on forever. There is a dog act that I wish had gone on forever, too. Peter Stone's book accomplishes its purpose, I guess, and the management has had the decency to keep the amplification level low enough for us to distinguish the speakers and the singers.

As for my reservations, Robert Benchley, reviewing the Follies of 1922 for *Life*, wrote, "It is customary to say that the Follies are beautiful to look at. All right, they are beautiful . . . but I like a little radiation of some sort in my beauty." —Edith Oliver



Organism and Environment

The Key to the Garden

The shell of a large doll house superimposed on a child's face and hanging from the flies dominates the stage at the St. James Theatre, where "The Secret Garden" is playing. The face is that of Daisy Eagan, the extraordinary little girl who plays Mary Lennox in this lovely and evocative musical version of the children's book by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Elsewhere on Heidi Landesman's set—a replica of a child's toy cardboard-and-cutout theatre—rose-lipped lads and lasses peer out from bowers crowded with Edwardian images of childhood: dolls, toys, masks, puppets, birds, baby animals, flowers, butterflies, bits of eyelet lace. The doll house is more austere. Most of its rooms are empty, and those that aren't are filled largely with objects that have no place in a child's nursery: elegant pieces of furniture in miniature, mantelpiece ornaments (a highly breakable-looking model schooner, a glass ball of some sort)—things a child would be chased away from and told not to touch. The only modern image on the set is the face behind the doll house, which we see a fuller version of on one of the panels to the right of the stage. It's modern because the child it depicts is looking down, rather than straight at us: she has a pen and a bottle of ink and is intent on a project of some sort.

The idea of the child as an independent agent, capable of moral autonomy, is one of the things that "The Secret Garden" gave to the world of children's literature, and the first time I saw the show (I've seen it twice) I remember being astonished that a Broadway musical should pick up on this. In fact, a good deal about "The Secret Garden" is surprising: it's quiet, charming, subtle, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation. Watching it, you find yourself wondering how anything produced on the commercial stage could be so tasteful, so utterly on the mark, and thinking, Well, of course, they're women. "The Secret Garden" has a book and lyrics by Marsha Norman, direction by Susan Schulman, and music by Lucy Simon; and Heidi Landesman, who designed the scenery, is also the primary producer. Theoni V. Aldredge and Tharon Musser designed the costumes and the lighting, so except for William D. Brohn, who did the orchestrations, and Michael Lichtefeld, who choreographed, "The Secret Garden," which sneaked into town with almost no noise or publicity, is a show put together entirely by women.

Men putting together a musical about a little orphan girl (think of "Annie") would probably have gone straight for the big money, peopling the stage with Broadway brats and musical-comedy stars. And, adapting this book for the Broadway stage, men would have kept zapping us with horticultural spectacle upon spectacle. Only women would have constructed a show around the device of not showing you the garden until the last possible moment. Only women would have produced a show in which Mandy Patinkin, Alison Fraser, and Robert Westenberg appear without billing, as part of an ensemble. And only women would have seen that to cast a conventional child star—or any young actress more mannered or self-conscious than Miss Eagan—in the role of Burnett's unprepossessing heroine would have been the death of her story.

A desentimentalizing of childhood was one of the things that made this story revolutionary for its time. In that regard, it's the girls'-book equivalent of "Huckleberry Finn" (a musical version of which Miss Landesman designed a number of years ago). But, unlike Huck, nasty, selfish Mary and her even nastier, more selfish cousin Colin are not initially likable. What was so unheard-of about "The Secret Garden" was the idea of making a virtue of aggression and disobedience. If Mary is redeemed and transformed by her obsession with a mysterious walled garden and her contact with a child even ruder and more unattractive than herself, it is only because her imperviousness to authority has led her to them. But Burnett (the author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy") had herself been instrumental in creating the "beautiful child" cult to which Mary was a reaction, and the last portion of the book lapses into a mawkish piety that even the book's most ardent admirers could do nothing with.

The show at the St. James is not slavish but faithful in its approach to adaptation—if not to the spirit of the book, at least to the spirit that informs its place in our culture and consciousness. Some characters have been altered or omitted; others, like Colin's scheming uncle (Mr. Westenberg) and his dead mother (a sort of Lilac Fairy figure, played by Rebecca Luker), have been given greater prominence. The reclusive Mr. Craven (played here by Mr. Patinkin) has been transformed into a much more caring father and guardian; the personality of the crotchety old gardener, Ben Weatherstaff (Tom Toner), is softened, and his acerbity has been transferred to Dickon, the hopelessly idealized Yorkshire peasant boy, played here with grace, command, and a kind of dry diffidence by John Cameron Mitchell. The personalities of the children have been toned down, so as to accord with our perception of unpleasant children as unhappy rather than unmannerly. Thus, Miss Eagan's performance is characterized by a stillness rather than a sourness, while her wonderful colleague John Babcock, who plays Colin so unaffectedly, makes one think more of vulnerability than of imperiousness.

In general, the impulse seems to have been toward a notion of storytelling more in keeping with the modern children's-book tradition that "The Secret Garden" helped to usher in. It's as though Mrs. Landesman and her creative team, in adapting a cherished and slightly dated book, tried to make something out of its flaws. What they've fashioned is in part a comment on the particular moment in time that produced "The Secret Garden." A daguerreotype of her dead aunt that Mary carries around with her (it drives the plot along) is pure invention, as is the number that begins Act II—a birthday picnic, which we gradually come to realize is a dream, because the clusters of people posing for a photographer could never have met. It's the vocabulary of psychoanalysis—memory, dream, desire—captured by the medium of nostalgia and regret.

Throughout the play, spirits from the past make ghostly passages across the stage, replaying scenes and conversations from long ago. There's an ayah (Patricia Phillips), an Indian fakir (Peter Marinos), elegant officers and ladies who waltz prettily around the stage like music-box figures. It's mood-painting rather than exposition, and it's all done with tremendous attention to detail: everyone in the ensemble, which is led by Kay Walbye and Michael De Vries, as the ghosts of Mary's parents, looks just right and sounds just right, which may in part be owing to the fact that the dialect coach (Barbara Rosenblat) is there onstage playing the role of Mrs. Medlock. The only glitch in the whole fabric is Mr. Patinkin. Alone of the company, he is out of context in the Edwardian setting, refusing to attempt an English accent and continually drawing attention to himself. One wishes that someone had tactfully explained to him the difference between being uninvolved (as Mr. Craven is supposed to be) and seeming self-involved, and had also explained that "The Secret Garden" is a story about a little girl. Still, it's nice to see him and Mr. Westenberg sharing a Broadway stage, and right, too, that two Sondheim performers should appear here.

Watching "The Secret Garden," you get the feeling that Landesman and company are very much Sondheim's daughters. They've learned from him that two men singing an emotive duet (an idea Sondheim imported to the Broadway stage from opera) can provide moments of great power and beauty—moments that justify the invented plot twist that here makes such a duet possible. Miss Simon's music draws largely on nursery rhyme and folk song (and a certain amount of seventies pop, for Dickon), but it's not ignorant of Sondheim—or of Benjamin Britten, for that matter—just as Miss Schulman's staging is not ignorant of Balanchine and Robbins. Best of all is the sense of "The Secret Garden" as a product of the Edwardian era's twilight: certain images on Mrs. Landesman's set might be allusions to coming modernity—a picture painted on the backdrop might be somebody's model train or might be a railway disaster; a figure too frightening to be a toy soldier makes one think of the Great War—and the whole finale is a farewell to the spirit world. As, one by one, the ghosts wave to Miss Eagan and drift offstage, you know that at least part of what Mary is saying goodbye to is a charmed Victorian world—a nostalgia for which is what makes this book, with all its imperfections, so beloved by us.

—Mimi Kramer

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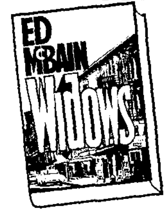

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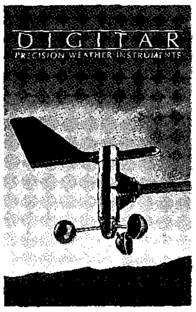

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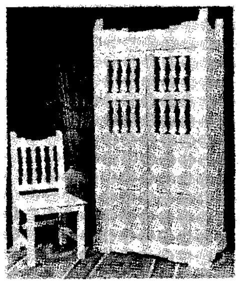

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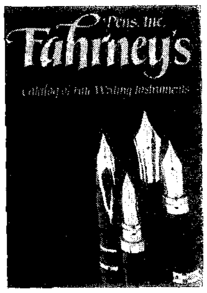

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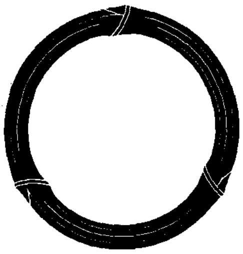

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Miracle or Golden Handiwork

Sir Georg Solti ended his twenty-two years as musical director of the Chicago Symphony by conducting performances of Michael Tippett's new "Byzantium," on a bill with Mahler's Fifth Symphony, and of Verdi's "Otello"—a concert presentation in which Luciano Pavarotti sang the title role for the first time. After Chicago performances, the programs came to Carnegie Hall, where each was given twice.

"Byzantium" was a joint commission from Carnegie Hall and the Chicago Symphony, to mark the centenary of each. A setting for soprano and large orchestra of the Yeats poem, it lasted twenty-seven minutes. Tippett reads the famous lines in the traditional way, as an allegory of the creator who imposes order, and writes that he "identified completely with its emphasis on the notion of artifacts, enshrining values that can be set against the impermanence of the everyday world and the complexities of the human beating heart." From the last lines of the poem—

> Those images that yet
> Fresh images beget,
> That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented
> sea—

he takes license to let his own musical images flower freely. His "Byzantium" is less an orchestra-accompanied song than an expansive tone poem after Yeats, embodying a vocal line, and cast in the five stanzas of the original. The score does not have the compact, hammered surface of the poem, in which charged lines set a silent reader's mind ringing. Tippett catches resonances that the lines inspired in him and lets them ring out for us with generous, abundant musical imagery. The "great cathedral gong" of the poet's first stanza is literally sounded. The "winding path" of the second is traced in winding musical lines. The golden bird of the third, "planted on the star-lit golden bough," gives exuberant unaccompanied cries of "cocorico." The soprano breaks into ecstatic vocalises on "ah." Yeats has long been for Tippett what Mallarmé has been for Boulez; lines of Yeats end "The Midsummer Marriage" and—in a paraphrase of an earlier direct quotation—"King Priam," and open "The Mask of Time." Familiar Tippett imagery appears in the new work: deep, complicated, pregnant chords that recur as punctuation and prompting; little tonal fanfares that shine out, bright and startling, against alien harmony; episodes of linear scurry and flurry; passages of near-reckless, bounding and bouncing *cantilena*. "Byzantium" has been called repetitious, and even self-indulgent, and I hear why. But it seems to me late work (Tippett is eighty-six) of rare vitality and inventiveness.

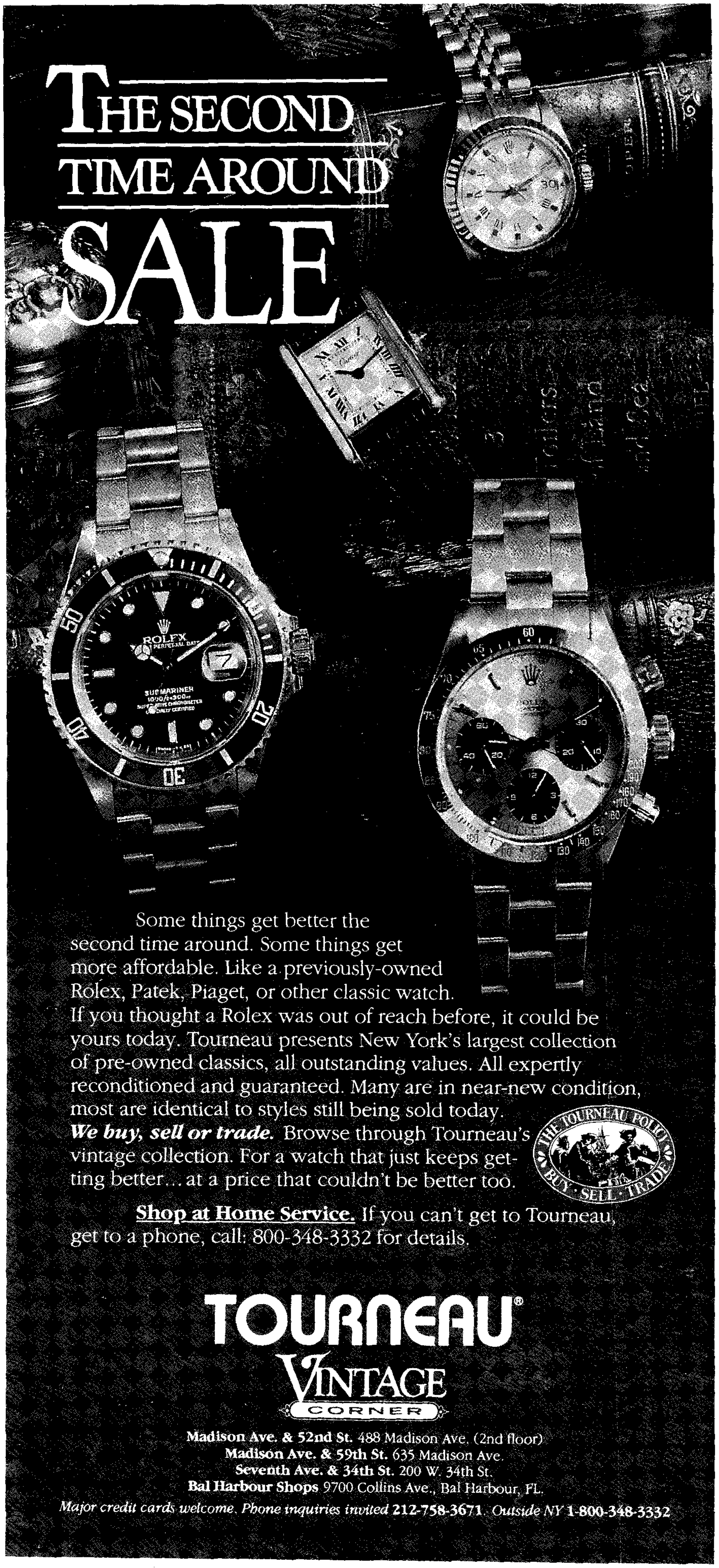
The performance was gleaming and accurate but not exactly "good." Tippett first performances seldom are: his scores are as unconventional as those of Berlioz, and it takes special advocates to disclose the secrets that then become apparent to all. (His Piano Concerto broke down at its première, and it was long before its lyrical greatness was widely heard. His first opera, "The Midsummer Marriage," failed at its first performance but triumphed years later when it was aptly championed.) The score of "Byzantium" was published last year. The vocal line was composed for Jessye Norman, with an emphasis on her splendid low and middle registers. (In the "Ring," she could be a noble Erda.) It lies mostly on the staff, with A or A-flat as the high-climax notes and just two passing B-flats. And it is composed as if for a young Flagstad—for a singer who combines Brünnhilde's majesty and power with the bright swiftness that Flagstad brought to Grieg's "Haugtussa" cycle. Miss Norman could be swift once, but she has allowed her majestic voice to become slow of utterance. At any rate, two weeks or so before the première Miss Norman chucked, "for personal

"Being defeated at Waterloo was bad enough. But then to lose all his contracts for product endorsements!"

reasons" (the official announcement vouchsafed no more). Faye Robinson, who had already been engaged for the London première of "Byzantium," at this summer's Proms, stepped in. She is a Tippett adept, who sang and recorded the soprano role in "The Mask of Time." She is an attentive and alert interpreter. But she lacked vocal majesty; her low register was weak, and some of her high notes were pushed, unpleasant, and impure, not flowing and beautiful. And barely a word that she sang could be understood. Solti, I thought, hit the music too hard—made insistent some episodes that are marked "light, dancing," and missed the moments of tenderness, gentleness, merriment. "Byzantium" is a more various, less constantly loud and strenuous work than it seemed in the Carnegie performances.

The visits of Sir Georg and the Chicago Symphony to Carnegie have long been high points of the New York season. Usually, they have brought with them big, important programs, "blockbusters." Sometimes I have been less than wholly appreciative—admiring power, precision, and excitability but missing depth of intellectual and emotional perspective. To the Mahler Fifth that followed "Byzantium" I succumbed. Sure, it was often hectic, exaggerated, at times needlessly loud. But it was honest and direct, urgent, irresistible. In one respect Mahler's score was wronged: the portamento string slides received no more than token observance.

IN a staged "Otello," Mr. Pavarotti might be grotesque. In the concert performance, his voice sounded the music with a thrilling clarity and firmness of word and tone. His reluctance to be intimate, to engage with and respond to another character, spoiled the love duet, but in Othello's blazing monologues he was brilliant. In the last act, Kiri Te Kanawa, the Desdemona, was fired—perhaps in part by her Othello's behavior—to give the performance of her life. During the Willow Song and Ave Maria, he, enthroned beside her, put on a rival show, bibbing pills and potions, and deploying a giant kerchief in many ingenious ways: as mopper, muffler, yashmak, tarnhelm. She—instead of seizing the *fazzolettone* and swatting him—ignored him and sang her heart out. Never again let Dame Kiri be dubbed Dame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Dreary. She was radiant. The beauty of her tone has never been in question; to beauty of tone she added a beauty of enunciation, a feeling for the utterance of consonants and distinct vowels, which made her once again the ardent, marvellous performer of her early days. The Willow Song and Ave Maria provided one of those episodes of transcendental rapture which operagoers remember all their lives: singer, conductor, players (English horn and flutes), and audience caught together in an enchanted spell.

The concerts, like so many "high-profile" concerts today, doubled as recording sessions. ("Byzantium" was also recorded.) I hope the disks capture the special quality of Desdemona's scena. Mr. Pavarotti was inspired by it to a moving account of the finale. Leo Nucci, the Iago, was vocally patchy—his pitching was cavalier—but textually incisive. Elzbieta Ardam, a Polish mezzo making her American début, was a decent Emilia until in the last scene she elected to shout. Anthony Rolfe-Johnson was a chipper Cassio, a little too intent on showing the power of his voice. The singers were stationed on a bridge (complete with prompt box) behind the orchestra, and the large, splendid Chicago Symphony Chorus, trained for the occasion by Terry Edwards, was ranged behind them. Solti and the orchestra were often very loud, but excitingly, not crudely, so. They did not drown the singers. "Otello" has always been one of Solti's best operas; twenty-eight years ago, he conducted a new Met production. With a great orchestra out on the open platform, not in a pit, the vitality and variety of Verdi's string writing was breathtaking. The woodwind trills through the first clause of Iago's Credo were terrifying.

IN the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, "La Clemenza di Tito" was rated as high as any of Mozart's operas. It was played throughout Germany, in Paris and Petersburg and Moscow, in Naples and Milan; it was the first Mozart opera to reach London (in 1806). Franz Niemetschek, Mozart's earliest biographer (in 1798), tells us that it was "esteemed the most perfect work Mozart completed." Kleist's uncle, who attended the première, in 1791, and its revival three years later, wrote of "Gluck's nobility united to Mozart's original art, his outpouring of emotion, and his irresistible harmonies," and said that "connoisseurs are uncertain whether 'Tito' does not even surpass 'Don Giovanni.' " Only later did "Tito" acquire the reputation of being a piece of hackwork, run up for Leopold II's Prague coronation and—as Edward J. Dent put it in his "Mozart's Operas" (1913, revised in 1946)—"written by a man in broken health, exhausted by overwork, and forced to write in haste against his will." A return to the canon began in 1969: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle directed "Tito" in Cologne that year, and thereafter in several other cities; the largest manifestation of his production reached the Met in 1984 (and was revived this season). The Ponnelle version is handsome, formal, mannered, not unflecked by vulgarity. Covent Garden achieved a more confident balance of formality and passion in its 1974 production, after which it became clear that "Tito" needed no special pleading. In 1979, when the City Opera mounted it, I suggested that well before the Prague commission arrived Mozart's thoughts had been turning toward the creation of an opera seria, one that in richness of music and depth of emotion would transcend the opere serie of his contemporaries as fully as his comedies transcended their lightweight opere buffe. In 1786, he revised "Idomeneo" and wrote new music for it. In the following years, he composed great opera-seria scenas: "Alcandro, lo confesso," "Bella mia fiamma," "Ah, se in ciel," and, perhaps even before "Tito" itself was commissioned, its heroine's rondo, "Non più di fiori."

Daniel Heartz, in his beautiful and moving study "Mozart's Operas" (California)—which is titled in tribute to Dent—treats "The Magic Flute" and "Tito" as twin crowns of Mozart's career. In singspiel and in opera-seria format—in very different operas that nevertheless have some close musical links—the composer told of steadfastness through trials, of compassion, of forgiveness, and of a ruler's moral responsibilities. Titus has much in common with King Idomeneus, but also with Sarastro. Mr. Heartz also makes a point overlooked by those who affirm that in essaying an opera seria after "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and "Così" Mozart was reverting to a dead formula. Outside Vienna (where the Emperor's taste was for comedy), opera seria still flourished, and Metastasian formality was refreshed by revisions kin to those that led Mozart to say that his "Tito" librettist, Caterino Mazzolà, had converted Metastasio's "Clemenza di Tito" into "a real opera." Mozart's "Tito" was no dodo; Mr. Heartz calls it "the most modishly up-to-date work that he left," and continues, "Mozart was trying, for a final time, to challenge Paisiello and the Italians on their own terms. And he succeeded."

A new production of "La Clemenza di Tito" was the gem and centerpiece of the Houston Grand Opera's month-long Mozart celebration, just ended. It was played twelve times. Around it were star-cast revivals of "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," "Così," and "The Magic Flute." Mozart's last five operas were presented in a close-packed schedule; sometimes two operas were on at once, one in each theatre of the Houston house. The "Tito" was so remarkable that, on a three-day visit that covered—with some overlapping—four operas (not "Così"), I skipped Act III of "Figaro" and much of "Don Giovanni" in order to hear and rehear "Tito." John DeMain, the company's musical director, conducted instrumentalists aware that—as Niemetschek put it—"every part, even the most modest instrumental voice . . . combines to enhance the most beautiful unity of the whole," and in the thousand-seat theatre, with the pit level set high, everything told. Carol Stinson played eloquently the clarinet and basset-horn roles that Mozart composed for Anton Stadler, who also inspired the Clarinet Quintet and the Clarinet Concerto. Thomas Lynch's set evoked classical Rome as Mozart saw it in the eighteenth century—grandeur and proportion of masonry romanticized by the incursion of nature's vegetable life. Peter Kaczorowski's lights turned a single set, on many levels, into many distinct, dramatically effective places. Dunya Ramicova's costumes brought the plot against Titus forward to the French Revolution (Marie Antoinette was a sister of the monarch for whose coronation the opera was written) and clad principals and choristers in a manner attractive and dramatically potent. In an age when much Mozart (notably Ponnelle's) is presented in near-monochrome, this strongly colored "Tito" excited both eye and ear. Stephen Wadsworth directed. He had inspired his cast to feel and express the emotions with uncommon force.

Voltaire admired Metastasio's libretto. In the preface to "Sémiramis" he called Titus' interview with the guilty Sextus and his subsequent soliloquy—which Mazzolà altered little—"two scenes worthy of the finest that Greece ever produced, if not superior . . . worthy of Corneille when he is not ranting, of Racine when he is not flimsy . . . two scenes founded not on an operatic brand of love but on the noble sentiments of the human heart." In the Houston production, these scenes—Titus stricken by his friend's betrayal, unable to comprehend it; Sextus rent between his love for Titus and his infatuation with Vitellia, unable to explain his action without betraying her—were powerfully affecting. One quite forgot that much of their music is probably not by Mozart. (They are enacted largely in secco recitative—once ascribed to Süssmayer—whose authorship is still in doubt.) Mr. Wadsworth's direction, Mr. DeMain's pacing, and passionate singers knit recitatives and arias—Sextus' moving "Deh, per questo istante solo," Titus' noble "Se all'impero"—into one flow of action. Sometimes things became a trifle stagy: when Titus overturned his throne and crashed it to the ground; when, after tearing Sextus' death warrant into fairly large pieces and thrusting them into his pockets, he at the climax of the aria tossed high a shower of evidently prepocketed confetti.

Peter Kazaras was a good Titus. Met Taminos have brought confidence to this gifted, intelligent, but sometimes uneven tenor. Titus is a difficult role; Mr. Kazaras had got most of it, not all, into his voice, and his interpretation was the most thoughtful and vivid I have encountered since Julius Patzak's. Lorraine Hunt's Sextus was sublime, with timbres, radiant and steady, that touched the heart. She employed high vocal art—notes that glowed as they grew, or fined into exquisite pianissimi—with emotional directness. One hung on her phrases. Marquita Lister, the Vitellia, was also remarkable. She studied at the Houston Opera Studio, and has been heard in London as Gershwin's Bess. Tall, of stunning appearance and demeanor, she seems destined to be an important new Elvira, then Anna. Like Miss Hunt—like all singers who make opera electric—she timed and pronounced and weighted phrases memorably, in tones filled with character. Annette Daniels and Lee Merrill, the Annius and the Servilia, were steady, pleasing young singers.

The Da Ponte operas were played in the larger theatre, as a "trilogy," assembled from productions that had been directed initially, in 1986-88, by the late Göran Jarvefelt (with this festival in view) and were revived now by assistants who had worked with him. Christoph Eschenbach conducted all three, with the Houston Symphony. They shared a permanent set, designed by Carl Friedrich Oberle: a spacious, Drottningholm-inspired perspective room, kept largely bare, with two portals on either side and an arch at the back that could open to various vistas. What I saw—most of "Figaro," the outer scenes of "Don Giovanni"—was, like other Jarvefelt stagings, somewhat plain and schematic. A "Figaro" without a garden for the final confrontations and reconciliations is a "Figaro" denatured. The "Flute," also in the larger theatre, was a revival of the colorful 1980 production by Frank Corsaro, designed by Maurice Sendak, and it was directed this time round by Mr. Sendak. There were well-known Mozart singers in the casts: Thomas Allen (Count and Don), Karita Mattila (Anna and Fiordiligi), Renée Fleming (Countess and Elvira), Renato Capecchi (Bartolo and Alfonso), Deon van der Walt (Ottavio and Ferrando). Among those less familiar I enjoyed Nuccia Focile, a Susanna not ideally limpid of tone but lively and engaging in her utterance of the text; Robert Orth, a Papageno whose clear way with words was especially satisfactory to the author of the translation used; and Ewa Malas-Godlewska, a Queen of the Night fiery and brilliant in her second aria.

—ANDREW PORTER

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REPORT FROM VIENNA

OLD VIENNA—the ghost that some Austrians mock, others fear, and all are obsessed with—seems at times to live on and on. One morning last fall, as I was walking through the *Kaisergruft*, the imperial burial vault that lies under the Capuchin Church in Vienna's Neuer Markt, the ghost of Old Vienna struck again. The crypt, where the bones of a hundred and forty-six Hapsburg emperors, empresses, and princes of the blood are stored in great zinc coffins, is a dank, musty place, some fifteen feet underground. Most of the caskets in it are narrow, but some are wide enough to accommodate two bodies, and are elaborately carved. The caskets are arranged casually, like Pharaonic sarcophagi in the Cairo Museum of Antiquities. A sign at the entrance proclaims the crypt to be one of Vienna's most frequently visited attractions. A foreign diplomat calls it "*la morgue autrichienne*"—a phrase he savors for its ambiguity, its baroque combination of sentimentality and decay. In 1989, when Zita, the ninety-six-year-old widow of Austria's last emperor, died in exile, in Switzerland, her body was brought back and given what amounted to a state burial in the crypt. Leading politicians, statesmen, and functionaries of the republic attended, and the entire city center was closed off for the occasion.

Zita's casket was hidden under heaps of fresh flowers when I passed it, more than a year later. Forty or fifty visitors were standing nearby, next to the casket that holds the bones of Francis Joseph I, who is often said to have been the last great Hapsburg emperor, even though he dragged his tottering empire into total ruin in the First World War. I looked in my guidebook and learned that among Francis Joseph's real and bogus titles were Duke of Auschwitz and King of Jerusalem. A few of the visitors milling around his tomb began to sing the old Austro-Hungarian imperial hymn, in Czech. Soon the rest joined in. The vault reverberated with Haydn's well-known melody. It happened that the visitors had been bused in earlier that morning from Brno, a city in Czechoslovakia about an hour away. They were not necessarily monarchists; in summoning up the long-vanished monarchy they were evoking a lost way of life, or an illusion of it, and they were also protesting their more recent past under Communist domination. They were middle-aged, and some had the weathered faces of country people. An Austrian man, in an elegant silk suit, stood watching these proceedings with glistening eyes. Then he pushed through the crowd and cried out that he could not remember a more moving scene since the end of the war. "We belong to the same spiritual realm!" he exclaimed. Some of the bystanders applauded. The incident reminded me of a statement I heard several times while I was in Vienna, which is that Austria is more than a territorial concept—it is a frame of mind—and that a new, Austria-centered *Mitteleuropa* may soon emerge from the ruins of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

SPARKS FLY WHEN
THE LITTLE GRAY SUIT
MEETS
THE LITTLE BLACK DRESS.
R. Chast

Outside the crypt, pictures of the last two Hapsburg emperors were on sale, along with postcards with rhymed paeans to the imperial family and copies of Stefan Zweig's memoir "Die Welt von Gestern" ("The World of Yesterday"), a much quoted description of life in the defunct empire. In a representative passage Zweig writes, "Everything had its norm and its definite measure and weight. He who had a fortune could accurately compute his annual interest. An official, or an officer, for example, could confidently look up in the calendar the year when he would be advanced in rank, or when he would be pensioned."

THE concern in Austria for titles and the servility toward those who bear them are another relic of Old Vienna. At the hotel where I was staying last fall—an old-fashioned one, in the heart of the inner city—the clientele was mostly stout out-of-town bureaucrats who were attending a seminar on public administration, and they all seemed to address one another as Herr Senatsrat, Herr Doktor, Herr Direktor, Frau Ministerialrat, or Herr Hofrat. Frau Chefin (literally, Mrs. Chief) ran the hotel from an office, behind the reception desk, in which framed photographs of President Kurt Waldheim and the Pope were hung on the wall. After a few days, it occurred to me that titles might be a kind of buffer, a means of maintaining *Distanz*, a defense against the relentless pressures of *Gemütlichkeit*. There was a letter in one of the local papers during my stay which proposed that when people in Vienna die they ought to be buried standing up, since they spend so much of their lives bowing down.

The hotel, on a quiet street around the corner from the Cathedral of St. Stephan, was a place of plump upholstered chairs and of soft feather beds in which one woke to the muffled boom of church bells. My window afforded a lovely view of gables and towers rising above green tiled roofs in the autumn sun. For sheer beauty and surface texture there are few places so pleasing to the eye as the inner city of Vienna. Up and down my narrow street, lined with old frame houses and beautiful Renaissance and rococo façades, were polished copper signs advertising the services of a dozen or so Professors, Doktors, Assessors, and Dozents. There was also one Court Counsellor. The monarchy was abolished in 1918, but the republican government still confers the title of Actual Counsellor of the Court on senior civil servants. The title "Professor" is an honor bestowed on, and used by, opera singers, sculptors, and piano tuners in good standing as they approach the age of retirement. The old titles of nobility are banned, but that means only that they can't be listed in the telephone directory. Otherwise, they are still very much respected, and used. I called the office of a well-known hotelier and asked to speak to Herr X, and was told testily, "His Grace is out of town today."

VIENNA, once a great imperial capital, is a city that now feeds on its past. It suffers from a recurrent fear—the fear of being irrelevant, left out, hopelessly provincial. But when people here say, with characteristic acerbity, that serious creative work is impossible in Vienna, they are reassuming an Old Viennese pose; Freud once said that he had not come across a new idea here in fifty years—and he was speaking of a time that had seen Mach, Carnap, Wittgenstein, Kraus, Schoenberg, Loos, Musil, Broch, Schiele, Mahler, and Strauss. Undoubtedly, a profound sense of loss pervades the city. W. H. Auden spent the last years of his life at Kirchstetten, a village outside Vienna, and there he wrote:

> Standards at the *Staatsoper*
> steadily decline each year,
> and *Wien*'s become provincial
> compared to the pride she was.

A young Viennese sociologist named Silvio Lehmann says that in Vienna "a Maoist dream has successfully been realized—the countryside has captured the city." The city doesn't even have a newspaper of any importance or a major publishing house. Most people today read the tabloid *Neue Kronen-Zeitung*, which is among the yellowest of the yellow rags of Europe. When President Waldheim returned late last summer from a visit to Saddam Hussein, with Austrian hostages whose release he had been able to secure, the *Kronen-Zeitung* hailed Hussein for his "gift of friendship," for his good taste in ties and garden furniture, and for a smile reminiscent of "Jean Gabin and Marlon Brando." The *Kronen-Zeitung* has a circulation of a million, which makes it, on a per-capita basis, the most widely read paper on the Continent.

It is hard to imagine another European capital with a comparable history so reduced. Viennese intellectuals often talk of the consequences of what some call "the biological *Kahlschlag*," or clean blow—a term used in forestry when in one stroke an entire forest disappears. They are referring to the expulsion and the extermination of the Jews, and the loss of so many talented young men and women during the war. "The Jewish population of Vienna alone could have supported a quality paper," one journalist told me. After the introduction of the racial laws, in 1938, attendance at the state opera dropped by a third. Before the war, Austria had been an important academic center, the home of internationally known scientists and artists. Paula von Preradoviać, in the new national hymn she wrote after the establishment of the republic, in 1918, was able to call Austria a "home of great sons." The Vienna weekly *Profil* said last fall, "The great sons are dead or have emigrated, at least in science. . . . In scientific research Austria's status has long been that of a developing country." The magazine cited material assembled by the international data bank SCISEARCH which showed that in scientific publications Austria was trail-

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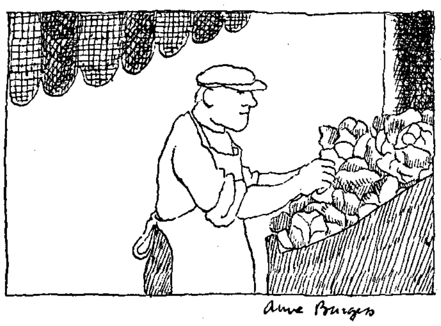
ing Hungary and Poland, and that Finns and Swedes produced three and four times as many scientific publications as Austrians did. I remember, a few years ago, finding myself by chance in conversation with a man in a Vienna bookshop. (I discovered later that he was a popular writer.) After a little while, he asked where I was from. I said I lived in Israel. He said, "Oh, how I wish the Arabs would drive the Israelis into the sea!" I asked why he was so eager to see this happen, and he replied, "If they do, perhaps the Jews will come back to Vienna, and it will be possible to live here again. It won't be so damned boring."

Of all the ghosts that haunt Vienna, perhaps the most tenacious are the ghosts of Nazism. There were proportionately many more high-ranking Nazis in Austria than in Germany, and so it was only to be expected that most Austrians would regard their annexation by Germany, in 1938, as an act of national liberation. It is said that Austrians, though barely one-tenth of the total population of the greater Germany, made up more than half of the staffs of the extermination camps. Sixty thousand Viennese Jews perished in them. Austrians have not allowed themselves (or have not been allowed by others) to forget. The resultant tension and constraint have marked Viennese life since the end of the war. Commemoration and repression often appear equally compulsive. Every so often, another exhibition on Jewish culture or Jewish history in Central Europe, entitled "Vanished Worlds" or the like, opens in one of the Vienna museums, and two such exhibitions were running during my visit. The city government was also offering a Tour of Jewish Vienna, an eerie affair much like the tour of the Christian catacombs in Rome. Besides literature of all sorts on the monarchy, the books most prominently displayed in the inner city's main bookshops are on the subject of Judaism.

Anti-Semitism still festers, too, in a curious, disembodied form; it is an anti-Semitism without Jews, for there are only a few thousand Jews left in Austria, and many of them are old and inconspicuous. Austria illustrates Sartre's remark that if Jews did not exist the anti-Semite would invent them. Most Austrians today have never seen or talked to a Jew—two-thirds of the population was born after 1938—and yet every poll taken suggests that racism is far from being the spent force that Bruno Kreisky, himself a Jew, always maintained it was. Kreisky, who served as chancellor from 1970 to 1983, died last summer, and was buried in the presence of the Cardinal of Vienna and Yasir Arafat. One of his last public statements had been that Austria was an unfairly maligned country. You sometimes hear a sick joke here that "in Austria even the Jews are anti-Semitic," and, indeed, Kreisky was often criticized for having, however inadvertently, "legitimatized" former Nazis by taking four of them, including a former S.S. Sturmbannführer, into his Cabinet—the first postwar Austrian chancellor to have done so. (In Germany, such a thing would probably have been unthinkable; however, Germany never elected a Jew as its federal chancellor.) It is not easy to make sense of the polls on anti-Semitism in Austria. Anyone with more than a fleeting acquaintance with Vienna knows that for every Viennese hatemonger you read about there are many Viennese who are liberal-minded. And yet in a 1980 poll twenty per cent of the Austrians who responded said they were in favor of legally prohibiting Jews from owning real estate and capital in Austria. A poll taken in 1984 by Vienna University social scientists showed that only fourteen per cent of the population was "largely free of prejudice" against Jews. Sixty-four per cent said that Jews were "too powerful" politically and economically. Thirty-four per cent believed that "honest competition" with Jews was impossible. Fifty-seven per cent said that they shouldn't have to be reminded so often of the murder of millions of Jews in the extermination camps. Twenty-one per cent said that the "removal of the Jews from our country [under the Nazis] has also produced positive results." In a more recent poll, twenty-three per cent said that "Jews should not occupy influential positions in our country," and six per cent confessed that they would be physically repelled if they had to shake a Jew's hand.



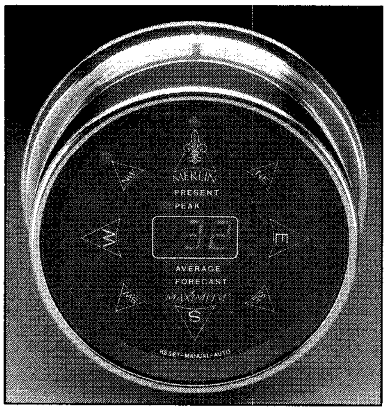
In the first three or four decades after the war, public confessions of prejudice in the media, which had been common between the wars, were rare, and in most cases were couched in euphemistic terms. In the tremendous heat generated by the Kurt Waldheim affair, they have become more explicit. Waldheim's election campaign was filled with anti-Semitic innuendo. The general secretary of Waldheim's conservative People's Party said publicly that "so long as it is not proved that Waldheim strangled six Jews with his own hands, there is no problem." That was too much even for the party, and the man had to resign—only to be given another prominent party post. Another People's Party politician compared the campaign against Waldheim to the Jews' treatment of Jesus Christ. Some columnists in the local press decried "Jewish wire-pullers," but others decried "Jewish manhunts" (a term reminiscent of "the darkest Middle Ages" or of "the Inquisition"). One claimed that "since time immemorial, Jews have had an ambivalent relationship to truth." Detailed analyses of anti-Semitic utterances in the three main Viennese dailies have been published during the past five years in the eminent Austrian *Journal für Sozialforschung*. Dr. Bernd Marin, the journal's editor, says that the Waldheim affair has reopened the national discussion of Austria's attitude toward Jews, and that's good, but it has also released a lot of pent-up hatred. There is a popular talk show on Austrian television called "Club 2." The show is run by liberal-minded young people; it often touches on controversial issues, and sometimes it runs late into the night. Even before tempers rose as a result of the Waldheim affair, whenever Jews were discussed on "Club 2" the switchboard was flooded with nasty calls, some saying things like "It's a shame they haven't all been gassed." A written record of such calls is routinely kept. An embarrassed producer showed me a transcript of one of the calls, and said, "This isn't Austria, but this *also* is Austria."

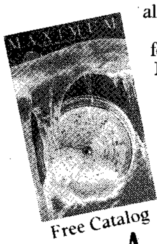
Freud has sometimes been criticized for assuming too readily that all men and women were like his Viennese patients. And yet, I think, it is not claiming too much to say that in the eyes of many a visitor Vienna remains the Freudian city par excellence. The city is redolent of Freudian associations. Its history, its architecture, its art—even its politics—breathe the idioms of Freud's vision: repression, screen memories, neuroses. Egon Schiele's paintings in the Belvedere look like illustrations for "The Interpretation of Dreams." In a book called "The Austrian Soul," which was a best-seller here a few years ago, Erwin Ringel, a well-known Viennese professor of psychiatry, wrote that Vienna has always been a classic breeding ground for neuroses and repression. The repressor, Ringel added, resents more than anything else those who remind him that he is one.

In Freud's apartment—the apartment he left in 1938, after the Nazi invasion—its former occupant is now solemnly enshrined as a household god. Its centerpiece is the famous couch, encased in protective plastic. Reverent crowds mill through small rooms filled with assorted documents and framed sayings of the Master, and with bric-a-brac and objets d'art. Enlarged photographs covering entire walls give the visitor an idea of what Freud's consulting room looked like. I overheard two young men discussing Freudian method. One said that the good thing about Waldheim was that he had brought psychoanalysis back to life in Vienna. "Every doorman now talks about repression," he said.

Inevitably, this kind of sarcasm has been gaining ground here in recent years; Waldheim has sometimes been described as the Great Enlightener. In 1988, a speaker at an anti-Waldheim demonstration outside the Cathedral of St. Stephan made the crowd laugh when he said, "So far, Waldheim has only been criticized. We ought to see the positive side, too. Thanks to Waldheim, Austrian historiography is thriving as never before. Our history under the Nazis is being explored. . . . Psychoanalysis, denounced for decades as Jewish *Schweinerei*, is now downright popular, thanks to Kurt Waldheim. He is not only the great *Verdrängungsmaschine*"—repression machine. "He is also the great *Aufklärungsmaschine*"—enlightenment machine. "He has a near-magical ability to attract everything that's nasty and mediocre in this country. When he goes down—and he will—he may drag them all down with him." The speaker was Georg Hoffmann-Ostenhof, the deputy editor of the local *Arbeiter-zeitung*, which is a social-democratic daily newspaper that has seen better days. I met Hoffmann-Ostenhof one morning in the Café Bräunerhof, an old-fashioned hangout for artists and writers, where for the price of a cup of coffee you can wade through the daily newspapers of five or more European countries. Hoffmann-Ostenhof, a soft-spoken man in his forties, is a veteran of many a liberal cause in postwar Austria. He told me that as a result of the Waldheim affair there was now in Austria a veritable Freudian "returning of the repressed." The last of the national taboos, the lie that had informed Austrian public life since 1945—that Austria was the unwilling victim of Hitler's first aggression—was finally being dismantled. Even the staid old Burgtheater was being radicalized. It was now staging plays critical of the political scene, and not only the usual fare of Nestroys and Grillparzers. The moral paralysis—the cramped cataleptic trance—was over. In the long run, the affair had opened an unprecedented opportunity to create a different Austria, he said.

Not all those on the liberal side of Austrian politics share this view. Peter Michael Lingens, who was the editor of *Profil* in 1986, when the magazine first exposed Waldheim's clumsy attempts to hide his past, has expressed fear that the anti-Waldheim campaign may have done more harm than good. Although every available war archive has been combed and many thousands of man-hours have been spent, no hard proof has so far been found that Waldheim was a war criminal. In an editorial that criticized Waldheim's detractors, Lingens pointed out that it is known only that he lied and is a "less than mediocre" man and President. According to Lingens, so many inaccurate or exaggerated claims have been made about Waldheim that it might soon become a matter of honorable duty to go shake his hand. The main educational task has always been to try to





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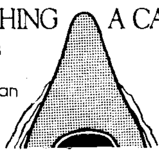

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distinguish among different degrees of guilt. The anti-Waldheim campaign mixed them all up, and so instead of clarifying the issues it only confused them more.

However, Hugo Portisch, the writer of a recent, enormously successful television documentary series on modern Austrian history, believes that the affair sharpened the debate over Austria's Nazi past by putting in focus, perhaps for the first time, the real dimensions of individual guilt and collective responsibility. For years, Austrians had been evading their history, Portisch told me. "There was hardly another people in Europe so reluctant to face up to their deeds," he said. Schoolbooks skipped over the Nazi period, between 1938 and 1945. Conservatives sentimentalized the monarchy; socialists scorned it as authoritarian. The controversy over the first Austrian republic (1918-38) and over the civil war of 1934 was especially bitter and uncompromising. The first Austrian republic had been a "republic that no one wanted," and least of all the socialists; their declared aim had always been union with Germany. Many Austrian socialists all too easily swung over to Nazism after 1938. As for the conservatives, Portisch said, to this day they tend to whitewash prewar Austrian Fascism; they continue to overlook the roots of Austrian anti-Semitism in their own narrow-minded, Catholic heritage. The second republic, established in 1945, after the liberation, found it convenient to carry on the fiction that the Austrians were "Hitler's first victims." The "state" of Austria had certainly been a victim, Portisch said, but the people were no different from the Germans. When younger historians, in the first decades after the war, made attempts to view both prewar political camps critically, the old wall of intolerance rose again, Portisch told me. For his television series, which was hailed in Austria as a "pedagogical landmark," Portisch dug up a lot of at once fascinating and shocking film material never before seen. He was especially courageous in exposing Austrian enthusiasm for and participation in the Nazi state. The series, which was broadcast in prime time, drew audiences almost as large as those for sports events. It was later published in book form and became a best-seller. Portisch is said to be one of the most popular men in Austria today and has been spoken of as a possible bipartisan Presidential candidate.

NOBODY really knows what the political and cultural effects of this new preoccupation with the past will be. The Waldheim problem has been only "sat out" so far, not resolved. Inaccurate or exaggerated accusations against Waldheim have made it easier for him to survive in office and for people to forget that he lied to them about his past. Nevertheless, intellectual opinion has remained sufficiently agitated to keep the affair alive. Back in March of 1986, when it was discovered that Waldheim had been a member of a Nazi cavalry unit, and he was sheepishly explaining that his membership had been of a purely sporting character, the socialist chancellor, Fred Sinowatz, said sardonically, "I take it he means to say that he has never been a Nazi, only his horse was." The remark was taken up by militants of the New Austria Republican Club, a loose association of students and intellectuals on the left wing of the Socialist Party. A well-known Viennese sculptor named Alfred Hrdlicka built them a big wooden horse wearing a Nazi cap. It was dubbed the "Horse Against Amnesia," and with it they began to pursue Waldheim wherever he went. They followed him to the dedication of bridges and roads and to similar events that make up much of the working life of a figurehead President. The wooden horse even followed him to St. Peter's Square in Rome, in 1987, when he went to visit the Pope, and it was accompanied by signs saying "Don't Forget to Resign," which generated derisive comments in the Italian media. In Salzburg later that summer, Waldheim was seen crying with fury upon discovering that the "Horse Against Amnesia" had followed him to the elegant music festival. Throughout 1988, which was the fiftieth anniversary of the German annexation of Austria, members of the New Austria Republican Club maintained "protest watches" outside the Cathedral of St. Stephan. They were attacked as rootless traitors and self-haters. "Waldheim is important," the sociologist Silvio Lehmann, who is a New Austria Republican Club activist, told me. "He is important not because he was such a big criminal—he wasn't—but because he is a small man whose mediocrity and conformism exemplified Austria from 1938 to 1945."

In the fall of 1988, the debate flared up once more. It was fanned by two ostensibly cultural controversies. The first was over the building of a *Mahnmal*—a public monument—in the inner city by the same Alfred Hrdlicka who had built Waldheim's wooden horse. The second was over a new play at the Burgtheater by the Austrian playwright Thomas Bernhard. According to Sigrid Löffler, an art critic writing in *Profil*, both were "continuations of the Waldheim debate through other means."

THE German word *Mahnmal* is a new one, and appears only in postwar dictionaries; it signifies a monument that is at once a memorial and a warning, an admonishment, an exhortation. The monument in question, entitled "*Mahnmal* Against War and Fascism," was erected in November of 1988 on an empty lot behind the Opera, across from the Café Mozart. (Film fans may remember the café from one of the early scenes in Carol Reed's "The Third Man.") It had been commissioned years before by a particularly courageous mayor. The *Mahnmal* consists of a bronze statue and four roughly sculptured blocks of basalt from the site of the former concentration camp of Mauthausen, near Linz. One block represents Orpheus in the underworld. Another block is inscribed with excerpts from the Austrian declaration of independence from the Third Reich. Behind these, two stone slabs, representing Fascism, tower over a figure of a bearded old man on his hands and knees, scrubbing the pavement with a brush; it commemorates a time in 1938 when Jewish men and women in Vienna were forced by Nazi thugs to scrub the streets with toothbrushes.

The *Mahnmal* is a harsh, ruthlessly provoking piece. Hrdlicka intended to confront every conscious passerby with shame and guilt, and perhaps he achieved his aim. Scenes of elderly Jewish men and women scrubbing streets in downtown Vienna while grinning Viennese in leather pants and dirndl skirts stand around are well known from photographs of the time. Hrdlicka's monument evokes an intensely local brand of horror, and there is no doubt that it touches many people in a visceral way. Nothing like it exists in Germany. The German writer Klaus Harpprecht recently claimed that no German government, of either the right or the left, would dare to force German citizens into "so hard, so immediate a confrontation with a past that is not yet past." Hrdlicka's scrubbing Jew, he wrote, is a visual and emotional documentation of guilt "harder and more real than Waldheim's war career, which—whatever it had been—can be communicated to the young only through the dossiers of the Wehrmacht bureaucracy."

Years before Hrdlicka's monument was unveiled, when it existed only on paper, it was attacked as insulting and tasteless, designed by the wrong artist and for the wrong place. The two major parties were divided. Since the *Mahnmal* was the project of a socialist mayor, it quickly became suspect in the eyes of conservatives; some were concerned that a monument against Fascism would remind people of Austrian Fascism before 1938. Militants of the extreme-right Freedom Party were fighting the monument tooth and nail. Warnings ensued that it might damage tourism during the Mozart bicentennial; after all, the fashionable Kärntnerstrasse, the Opera, and the Albertina Museum were only a few steps away, and tourists would not want to trip over the figure of an old Jew crawling on all fours. It was said that the sculpture was a piece of "Stalinist torte," that there should be a "clean city center," that the proposed site was much too important for this monument and had already been earmarked for a Mozart statue. The sculptor was quoted in the papers as saying, "Art is confrontation with power." He was thereupon attacked as, variously, a drunkard, a Communist, a pacifist, an anarchist, a scandalmonger, and a money-grabbing kitsch artist.

Then there were attempts to have the projected monument situated somewhere away from the inner city—first, to a spot at Mauthausen, and subsequently to the Jewish section of Vienna's Central Cemetery. When those failed, it was proposed to move the monument to Morzinplatz, a dismal square on the edge of the city center where the Gestapo had had its headquarters. Religious and ethical objections were also raised. The lot where the *Mahnmal* would stand had once been occupied by a house that had been destroyed by bombs during the war, burying people in the ruins of an underground shelter; the monument would "desecrate" their bones, it was

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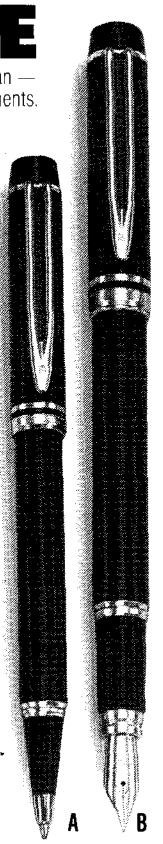

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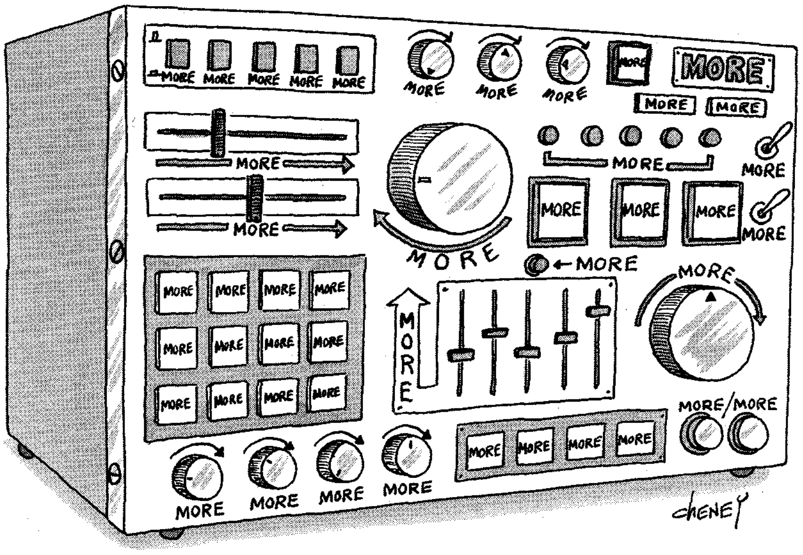
said, and "disturb their rest." Finally, there was an attempt by the Ministry of the Environment to insist that the site, which was now covered with grass, should be left as it was for ecological reasons.

Hrdlicka had originally asked for the best spot in town, the square outside the Cathedral of St. Stephan. He said, "After all, religion was also persecuted in the Third Reich." That spot had immediately been ruled out. For a time, Hrdlicka played with the idea of building another Plague Column—to commemorate the Black Death—on the Graben, next to the existing, seventeenth-century baroque Plague Column; it is one of Vienna's best-known landmarks, with a fine relief portrait of Leopold I on his knees, asking forgiveness of his sins and the sins of his fellow-Austrians.

The fight over the monument lasted more than ten years. The controversy became especially strident as the day of the unveiling approached. Waldheim supporters were against it, in part because it had been designed by the same man who had built the wooden horse. Socialists supported it, in part because Waldheim had defeated their Presidential candidate and they wanted to teach his supporters a lesson they would not quickly forget. By now, Jews were also unhappy. Some felt embarrassed by the old man's pose; they did not want to be reminded again of their humiliation, they said. Simon Wiesenthal, the Viennese Nazi-hunter who had helped to track Eichmann, objected to the name. "Why '*Mahnmal* Against Fascism'?" he asked. "Why not 'Against Nazism'?" Other critics objected to the word "war." Did it not take a war to beat Hitler? Still others feared that the monument would diminish the horror by making it banal: people would sit on the monument to eat their sandwiches. John Sailer, the owner of an art gallery on the Ringstrasse, complained that in the future "certain Viennese" would take their children to the monument and say, "This stuff about Auschwitz and Treblinka isn't true. See? They only forced a few Jews to scrub graffiti off the streets." The unveiling was attended by thousands, including the chief rabbi; the mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk; and the federal chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, but it was boycotted by the Foreign Minister, Alois Mock, and other leading members of the People's Party. Much can be said in favor of the monument and much against it. The real monument was the debate about it, which has continued to this day. Whenever I walked by, there were people looking at it. Several knowledgeable Viennese told me they were sure that the monument would sooner or later be blown up by some right-wing terrorist. One morning last spring, the figure of the scrubbing Jew was found covered in black paint, and had to be carted away to be cleaned. When it came back, a few strands of barbed wire were strung on top of it to prevent people from sitting on it. I was told that at a recent public discussion about Hrdlicka's monument an old Jewish woman got up and said she herself had been forced to scrub the pavement on the Graben in 1938. She walks by the monument quite often, quite willingly, she said, "and I am glad to see that people leave a few flowers there now and again."

LIKE Hrdlicka's monument, Thomas Bernhard's play "Heldenplatz," or "Heroes' Square," was violently attacked by politicians and in the press long before anyone saw it. When it opened, in November of 1988, President Waldheim denounced the play, in which he is called a "liar," and demanded that it be banished from the repertoire of the state-subsidized Burgtheater. Bernhard, who died of a heart attack, at the age of fifty-eight, a few months after the première, was Austria's best-known, most successful playwright, and a superb stylist. He was obsessed with the country's Nazi past and with its present, which he thought unhealthy, physically and spiritually. Bernhard held a unique position in Austrian public life—that of a kind of "negative poet laureate." Marcel Reich-Ranicki, who was for many years the literary editor of the conservative German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, once suggested that Bernhard, whose plays and books are peopled by the ghastly and the sick, by maniacs, psychopaths, criminals, suicides, and the dying, did not as an Austrian have to search far for his themes.

The Heldenplatz in Vienna is a great open square between the Ringstrasse and the Hofburg, the former imperial palace. On the Heldenplatz on March 15, 1938, a few days after German troops marched into Austria, Hitler announced "the completion of the most important act of my life, the entry of my homeland into the Great German Reich," and was hailed by an ecstatic crowd of three hundred thousand. The Heldenplatz is also where Waldheim's office is. The story line of "Heldenplatz," if a Bernhard play can be said to have one, follows the tragic life, ending in suicide, of a Jewish professor named Schuster, who left Vienna in 1938. The play opens a few hours after Schuster's death, and consists mostly of bitter, often brilliant dialogue and rantings by Schuster's survivors—his wife, his daughters, his brother. They are discussing the depressing condition of Austria and the reasons for his suicide. (Nearly all the characters, including, apparently, Schuster himself, seem to have gone through the Steinhof, Vienna's famous hospital for mental diseases.) It turns out that in 1988, fifty years after his emigration, Schuster returned to Vienna with his family and settled in an apartment overlooking the Heldenplatz. But he soon regretted it. He found the attitude toward Jews unchanged. In addition,



his wife was having hallucinations, imagining that she could hear the crowd screaming *“Sieg Heil!”* on the Heldenplatz, below. When Schuster kills himself by jumping down into the square the audience is given to understand that he does so because of Waldheim, and because of anti-Semitism and the general low state of affairs in Austria. The long rantings include remarks like “Jew-hatred is the pure, absolute, unadulterated nature of the Austrian.” The President is a “devious, lying philistine.” Austria’s newspapers are nothing but “party-oriented pigsties.” The professor is quoted by his brother as having said that in the Austrian National Library reading room he felt that he was “among Nazis,” and that “they are waiting only for a signal to proceed against us.” His brother says, “An unbearable stench spreads out from the Hofburg and from the Ballhausplatz,” the Chancellery. “This he could not bear anymore, our unfortunate brother.”

The play was commissioned by Claus Peymann, who had not long before been appointed the director of the Burgtheater; he is from West Germany and is a firm believer in provoking staid audiences. Long before the première, the scandal about the play raged in the local press, in keeping with an old saying that Vienna forgives anything except being deprived of a spectacle. Six actors resigned from the Burgtheater in protest over the play’s negative portrayal of Austrians. Excerpts from the play, taken out of context, were leaked to the press, generating political protests. Politicians said that they were all for artistic freedom, of course, but such “gross insults” were insufferable. Foreign Minister Mock said he did not have to let someone who “drew personal profit from the taxpayers’ money” offend Austria. Mock and others demanded that Peymann be fired. The Minister of Education and the Arts, Hilde Hawlicek, a Socialist, stood firm. “I myself wouldn’t have written that play, but art isn’t there for edification only,” she said. “Its task is to provoke, too.” Peymann said that the widespread call for censorship was reminiscent of “the days of Metternich.” As in the case of Hrdlicka’s monument, the press campaign against “Heldenplatz” was spearheaded by the *Kronen-Zeitung*, in the form of tendentious news coverage and columns, and dozens of well-orchestrated letters from readers. On the day of the opening, the tabloid came close to inciting arson by printing a full-page photomontage showing the Burgtheater going up in flames, over a caption that read “Nothing is too hot for us.” Peymann’s office was daubed with swastikas. On the fashionable Billrothstrasse, in downtown Vienna, Bernhard was physically attacked by an elegantly dressed man wielding a stick, who yelled, “You ought to be done away with!” In a comment on the incident the Viennese weekly *Falter* (“Butterfly”) wrote, “The fine gentleman must have held Bernhard for a Jew.” The debate was characteristically shrill, and was marked from the outset by xenophobia. Peymann’s directorship was described as “the foreign occupation of the Burgtheater.” As in the debate over Hrdlicka’s monument, Sigrid Löffler wrote, in this case, too, “prejudice reigns supreme: the prejudice against Jews, foreigners, and Communists.” A writer in the German *Frankfurter Rundschau* remarked on the prevailing “deeply reactionary climate of opinion, a basic element of Austrian society today.” In the end, the entire city became a grotesque stage on which life had caught up with Bernhard’s exaggerated fantasies.

When “Heldenplatz” finally opened, with some of the Burgtheater’s finest actors in the cast, it was something of an anticlimax. Viewed in its proper psychological and dramatic context, as even the *Kronen-Zeitung* critic confessed, the play was not necessarily a political statement but, rather, an “enormously comic piece of the theatre of the absurd,” whose “often quoted ‘parts’ are of little import.” “Heldenplatz” was broadcast live on Austrian television. It remained in the Burgtheater repertoire for more than two years, and played to full houses—over eighty thousand people saw it. I had seen it at the theatre on an earlier visit, and was able to see it again this time, on tape, and was struck anew by the superb acting and the hauntingly evocative mise en scène. A reviewer in Hamburg’s *Die Zeit* wrote, “The play is an exaggeration, of course. . . . On the other hand, one can exaggerate only what really exists. Seen from this

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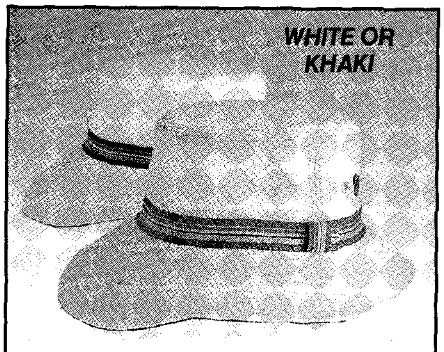

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angle, Bernhard is Austria's sharpest realist (and every Bernhard scandal is his greatest triumph). Once again, Waldheim and the others have blindly fallen into Bernhard's trap." The première was frequently interrupted by boos and by cheers. Many in the audience obviously wished to shout it down but—*bitte schön*—to enjoy it, too. At the end, there was a forty-minute ovation, punctuated by whistling and derisive calls. It was immediately noted that when Waldheim was denounced onstage as a "devious, lying philistine" there had been no boos whatsoever—only a deathly silence.

I INTERVIEWED President Waldheim one morning in his office, in the so-called Leopoldine wing of the old imperial palace. The wing is a seventeenth-century suite of grand rooms, richly decorated in cream and gold, and furnished with Venetian mirrors, imperial portraits, rare clocks, and delicate rococo furniture. The President's waiting room, perhaps one of the finest such rooms on earth, is the former bedroom of the Empress Maria Theresa. The President's office, a few yards away, looks out on the Heldenplatz.

When I entered it, Waldheim, wearing a dark suit, was standing under a huge chandelier. Without bending his long frame, he seemed to lean slightly to one side, looking oddly askew. His face struck me as not unfriendly. The strong nose, the hard chin seemed an index of the tough, enduring qualities of this man who, in his way, has managed to sit out his problems. (An opponent once said that he had a rubber hose for a backbone.) Waldheim has been a lonely man in recent years, unable to do what he likes best—travel to foreign countries and chat with their leaders. Since his election, he has been able to visit only the Pope, in the Vatican, and a few Arab and African leaders in their capitals. He is still shunned by most of the world's other leaders. In recent years, the Foreign Ministers of several countries have chosen to meet with their Austrian counterpart in Salzburg, Klagenfurt, or Graz, or even in an obscure Alpine village, rather than to travel to Vienna, where protocol would require a courtesy call on Waldheim. But Waldheim travels a lot within Austria. Sometimes, a bit incongruously, he turns up dressed in colorful Upper Austrian or Tyrolean *Trachten*. Last summer, Václav Havel came to Salzburg "as a private person" to open the music festival. He had been invited as a writer, long before he was elected President of Czechoslovakia. He took care not to sit next to Waldheim; President Richard von Weizsäcker, of Germany, was placed between the two. In his public speech Havel admonished Waldheim in his presence, saying, "Let us finally look calmly at our own faces and at our past. . . . In this corner of the world fear of one lie only gives birth to another lie. . . . The assumption that one can tack through history with impunity and rewrite one's own biography is a traditional Central European delusion. Anyone trying to do that harms himself and his fellow-citizens." Waldheim, who seems to be moved by little, said later that he did not see how Havel's words could have been directed at him. When he returned from Iraq late last summer, with the freed Austrian hostages in tow, he was hailed in the papers as a national hero, but there were also ads and flyers in Vienna saying "WE WANT TO BE FREED, TOO—OF WALDHEIM." I heard a man say on Austrian radio that the Waldheim disease, unlike Alzheimer's, makes you lose your memory for only three years. Though Waldheim has threatened on occasion to sue his detractors for libel, he has not sued anyone so far. The International Commission of Historians, formed to investigate his past—a group that he himself had promoted, and which was paid by the Austrian government—concluded its sober report with the words "Waldheim's presentation of his military past is in many areas not in harmony with the results of the commission's work. He tried to have his military past forgotten and, insofar as this was impossible, to play it down and render it harmless. This lapse of memory is, in the commission's opinion, so profound that it was unable to obtain from Waldheim any illuminating references for its work."

In Waldheim's office we settled in soft damask-covered chairs under a huge eighteenth-century painting that depicted the imperial household attending an opera performance at Schönbrunn. After a few introductory remarks, I asked Waldheim if he read what was being written about him in the newspapers. He said he saw only some of it, but enough to make him very sad indeed. He sighed. His family tended to take such things to heart more than they perhaps should. He deplored the attacks. They grieved him deeply. He was not made of wood. Every investigation had shown that the accusations were unjust.

He sat slightly hunched over, looking a bit like a sour seal, with his back to the great windows overlooking the Heldenplatz. I had seen the videotape of Bernhard's play the night before, and could not help asking Waldheim where he had been on that day in 1938 when the crowd down there was cheering Hitler and shouting "*Sieg Heil!*" Waldheim said he had spent that day at his parents' house, in Tulln, which is a little town in Lower Austria, fifteen miles from Vienna. He had been a student at that time, Waldheim said, and very poor. He could not afford to live in Vienna and was commuting every day to the university. But even if he had been in Vienna on that day he would not have shouted "*Sieg Heil!*" After all, hadn't his father been arrested and badly treated by the Nazis? He remembered his mother sitting in the cellar crying bitterly. His enemies had picked the wrong target, he insisted. True, he had not joined the Austrian underground, but then he had not volunteered for the Wehrmacht, either. He had merely tried to survive.

If that was so, I asked, why had he said during the elections that he had only done his "duty"?

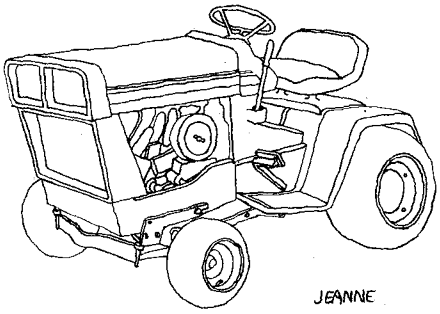
Well, Waldheim said, perhaps he should have used a happier expression. It was a mistake, but it had been such a difficult campaign.

Everything was the fault of the Yugoslavs, he declared. They had fabricated those accusations against him in the fifties, for political reasons. Shortly before that time, Yugoslavia had been exhorting Austria to cede it parts of Carinthia. Since he had served in the Balkans during the war, the Yugoslavs concocted something against him to embarrass Austria. Later on, because his book "In the Eye of the Storm" failed to mention his service in the Balkans, there were those who thought he had something to hide.

Why, then, I asked, had he suppressed that crucial fact in his memoirs? Waldheim interjected that his book was not a memoir—he had said so in the introduction. He got up from his chair and went to his desk to fetch the book. Actually, according to Waldheim, the omission was the fault of the editors of the English edition, who had chosen to concentrate on his career at the United Nations, saying that readers were not interested in what happened during the war. True, there were also those curricula vitae he had issued at various times which did not mention his service in the Balkans, either. The reason, he explained, was that service in the Balkans was not considered in the Wehrmacht to be service on the front; in the Balkans, there were only partisans. Perhaps it was because he was not guilty of anything, he said, that he had never written about his war service in the Balkans. (He was quoted a few years ago as saying that nothing interesting had happened to him in the Balkans. He had never imagined that such a fuss would be made about it. In that interview he makes serving in the Balkans in 1942-45 sound like spending a vacation in the Bahamas.) In the Balkans, he insisted, he had never heard a word about atrocities; they must have occurred while he was on home leave in Vienna. He regretted the monstrous tragedies and condemned them deeply. He also deplored the behavior of other Austrians during the war but could console himself with the fact that he and his family had not been Nazis.

Why were so many people attacking him, I asked.

The reason was simple, according to Waldheim. It had to do with his tenure as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The proof was that when he first ran for President of Austria, unsuccessfully, in 1971, no one had accused him of anything. The accusations arose only when he ran the second time, in 1986, after his U.N. tenure. He had made many enemies at the U.N., mostly because of his handling of Middle East problems. He would not say that those who were accusing him of war crimes were simply taking revenge. Still, among his American accusers and certain political foes of his in Austria a common interest had developed, and the affair was born.



I said that I had met people in Vienna who were not his foes but thought it might be best for him and for Austria if he resigned voluntarily, to devote himself to clearing his name; he would at the same time free the country from the burden and embarrassment of his problem.

Waldheim did not agree that he was a burden on Austria. On the contrary, tourism was on the rise; the economy was growing. True, he was isolated internationally, and that grieved him. But the people were on his side. Fifty-four per cent had voted for him in the elections. After his trip to Iraq, his personal popularity soared to seventy-four per cent. He was a God-fearing man; God and history would judge that he had been falsely maligned.

MORE ghosts: When the fledgling genre painter Adolf Hitler came to Vienna, in 1908, he at first drifted throughout the city and finally settled in a grubby shelter for homeless men, at 27 Meldemannstrasse. Meldemannstrasse was, and still is, a mean little street between the great northern railroad depots and the Danube docks. On his daily walks downtown, to admire and paint the marvels of the Ringstrasse on postcards, Hitler would cross the tracks and pass through the crowded old Leopoldstadt. At the bottom of Taborstrasse, he would turn right and cross the murky Danube canal into the inner city. Wherever he went, in Leopoldstadt or in the inner city, he would see foreigners and grow "sick from their smell." The morbid sexuality behind his ravings about crooked-legged Jewish bastards raping thousands of German girls is known to readers of "Mein Kampf." Vienna was the scene of his "greatest spiritual upheaval. . . . I had ceased to be a weak-kneed cosmopolitan and become an anti-Semite."

One day, I walked from Meldemannstrasse to the inner city, passing by the railroad yards and through the Leopoldstadt quarter. There is a temptation to imagine Hitler in this neighborhood: in a long black overcoat and greasy derby, marching through crowded streets past Hebrew shop signs and kosher groceries. At the beginning of the century, a third of Leopoldstadt's population were immigrants from Eastern Europe. Parts

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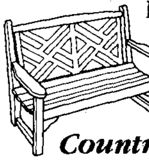

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of the quarter were heavily damaged during the war, and today it seems to have gone through a process of gentrification. Electric streetcars squeak through the winding streets. It is still a special place. You seem to hear foreign languages more often here than German: Czech, Hungarian, Russian, Romanian, Polish. The area is again teeming with immigrants and refugees, as it did before the First World War. I noticed a number of cars, mostly old and battered, with Polish or Czech license plates. As was true during the first decade of this century, the proximity of the northern rail terminals has brought about a relatively high concentration of new residents.

Over half a million Czechs, Hungarians, Russians, Poles, and Romanians are said to have migrated to the West in the past year alone, and many of them have settled in Austria. Austrian immigration laws and procedures are among the most liberal in Western Europe today. Czechs and Hungarians require no entry visas. A similar exemption for Poles was in force until last summer, then was lifted as a result of political pressure and agitation in the tabloid press. (I heard a commentator on Austrian radio say that the new regulation requiring Poles to obtain entry visas was designed to "combat Austrian xenophobia.") Although every second or third name in Vienna is Czech, Croatian, Polish, or Hungarian, popular prejudice against people of these nations and against other Eastern Europeans is said to have grown considerably in the past fifteen months. Ever since Czechoslovakia and Hungary opened their borders, more than a year ago, Eastern European tourists with hungry eyes glued to glittering shopwindows have been a common sight here, and the subject of much comment. Eastern European immigrants and tourists have been accused of bringing in crime, drugs, and prostitution. Immigration from the East was a major issue during the national elections last October. The Freedom Party, borrowing an old anti-American slogan that the Nazis used during the war, flooded the city with placards that said "Vienna Must not Become Another Chicago." The party doubled its strength.

Two prominent Socialist Party politicians, Josef Cap and Peter Marizzi, also joined the anti-foreigners campaign. When I asked an acquaintance how two men, each bearing a foreign name (the former is typically Czech or Slavic, the latter is Italian), could be in the forefront of the anti-foreigner movement, he said, "In Vienna, no ethnic group has ever had a monopoly on self-hatred." All last year, the anti-immigration campaign gained ground; though it is still remarkably free of physical violence of the kind so common nowadays in England, and even in Italy, it has caused a lot of soul-searching here in recent months. Several public bodies were waging campaigns against prejudice last fall. They were urging people to remember that Vienna's present mayor is a man named Zilk, that the federal chancellor is named Vranitzky, that his predecessor's name was Sinowatz, and that even Waldheim's name, before his father changed it, was Watzlawick.

One evening, I attended a public discussion of this and related issues, among them national amnesia, the so-called inability to mourn, and the resultant vacuity in Austrian public life. The politicians, it was said, were afraid not of Waldheim but of his supposedly overwhelming public support. An impassioned young man was complaining that despite the recent growth of prejudice and xenophobia the nostalgic dream of reconstituting a *Mitteleuropa* was still strong, and that many thought the realization of this dream to be Austria's historical "role." The worst Austrians were xenophobic, he said, but the best were hungry for a new Austrian "mission." "Why must nations always hanker after missions?" he cried. The discussion continued into the night. Outside, it was raining and cold; inside, tempers got heated and angry, a few very bitter words were spoken, and among the ghosts summoned up was that of Karl Kraus, Austria's famous "negative poet laureate" of the nineteen-twenties, who wrote of his countrymen after the First World War, "They will have forgotten that they lost the war, forgotten that they started it, forgotten that they waged it. For this reason, it will not end."

—Amos Elon

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THE MYSTERIOUS NORTH

[From the Toronto Globe & Mail]

Ketchup Correction

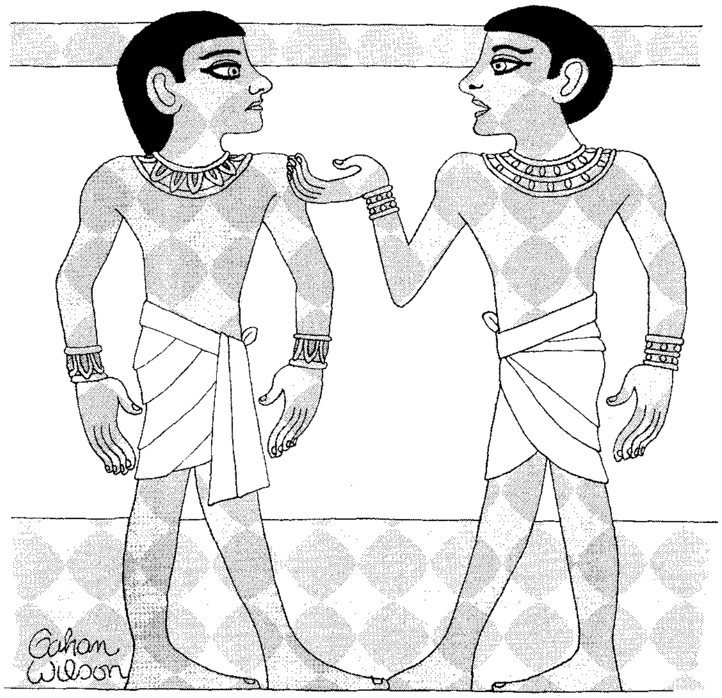
Top-quality ketchup would take at least 75 years to flow across Canada. An incorrect figure was given yesterday, owing to an error in the thinking process.

BOOKS

Stones of His House

EVEN the most ordinary life is a mystery if you look close enough. But the life of the English novelist Paul Scott, ordinary enough in many ways, turns out on close inspection to be very mysterious indeed. A superb new biography of him by Hilary Spurling (Norton; $24.95) answers some of the questions that cling to his solid, serviceable, very English name, while leaving much that is unfathomable. Scott died in 1978, just short of his fifty-eighth birthday, apparently at the height of his creative powers. He was in his mid-forties, and had produced eight mediocre and largely unsuccessful novels, when, having told his publisher that he wanted to write a "really big book," he withdrew from the world for his artistic do-or-die. He disappeared into the back bedroom of his very modest house in Hampstead Garden Suburb and emerged from solitary confinement a decade later aged and broken but having produced a masterpiece, "The Raj Quartet."

Since his days as a young Army officer in India during and just after the Second World War, Scott's imagination had been fixed on the subcontinent and on the dying days of the British Raj. He once said that for him India was the metaphor that every successful writer needs to find; India was the metaphor that had "chosen" him. He knew intuitively that the turning point of lost empire—the years just prior to Indian independence, in 1947—held some clue to Britain's present and could be for him the way into his own truth. All the earlier years of brooding and mulling and trying to write good books had yielded up their harvest at last: almost a million words, published between 1966 and 1975 in successive volumes, entitled "The Jewel in the Crown," "The Day of the Scorpion," "The Towers of Silence," and "A Division of the Spoils." For Scott's wife, Penny, to whom he had been faithfully married since 1941 and with whom he had two daughters, the end of the great project came too late. She had lived with him in the modest little house—by the end, not so much sharing it as serving side by side with him in her own solitary confinement, and acting, at his behest, as his jailer and keeping the world at bay. The four novels proved scarcely more successful than any of the eight previous ones, and their author was almost broke. In 1976, Penny left him: taking nothing but her handbag, she shut the front door behind her and walked away.

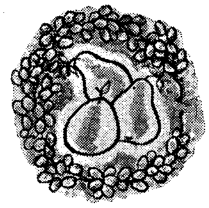


"Let's hope that with the passage of time the human race will become three-dimensional."

By 1977, Scott was too ill to receive in person the Booker Prize, for his final, and best-selling, novel, "Staying On." This was a short book, set in contemporary India, and it formed a sort of minor-key coda to the luminous and magisterial "Quartet." It is the story of Colonel Tusker Smalley and his wife, Lucy—an elderly English couple living out beleaguered lives in a fast-changing India, which the rest of the Raj has long since left behind. The Smalleys are in a doomed yet plucky skirmish against poverty, loneliness, and death and against the fat, nouveau-riche, rapacious Indian woman who, as their landlord, now holds power over them.

Prizes often alight on a writer's lesser work when the greater work is in the past, but the members of the Booker jury were clearly not the only British readers to prefer the shorter book. Many English people in the nineteen-seventies felt beleaguered themselves. And the tale of Lucy and Tusker, although deeply shadowed, is told with those popular English literary values irony and charm. In the new, uneasily multiracial, postcolonial Britain, it could amuse readers with some racial types that came close to the head-wagging Indians with absurd accents caricatured in the fifties by Peter Sellers. Whatever the reason, it was "Staying On" that gained Scott recognition before he died. But—strangely, in the case of a writer who was one of the great literary stylists of his generation—it was television that made Scott's posthumous international name. Granada Television's adaptation of "Staying On," with fine performances by the aging team of Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard, appeared in 1980, and its passionate, elegant version of "The Raj Quartet"—called "The Jewel in the Crown," after the first volume—mesmerized the British for fourteen weeks in 1984 and American viewers of PBS a year later.

ON both sides of the Atlantic, a discerning few discovered "The Raj Quartet" as its separate volumes were coming out. (Heinemann published it in England, William Morrow here. The late John Willey, at Morrow, was particularly loyal, making sure his author had enough money to keep going.) I cannot count myself among the pre-television Scott fans, but I'm certain they read each volume as if spellbound, establishing an intense relationship with the man who had drawn them into such an astonishingly convincing world. I'm certain that's what happened to them because it's what happened to me when I read all four books, one after another, not long ago. Even after seeing the television series twice, I read in an undiminished hungry daze. The real people and events I encountered during those few weeks seemed to me simply like parts of Scott's world. And though I read right on the jacket that Scott was dead, I had an impulse, as I shut the last volume, to write the man a letter—to reach out to him, get to know him somehow. He had poured prodigious amounts of imagination, skill, and wisdom into his work, but somehow I wanted him to give me *more*.



I read "The Raj Quartet" at what was for me the perfect time. I had been spending some months in England, during what proved to be the final days of Margaret Thatcher's premiership, which so often felt more like a reign. Everywhere, I had seen the old English culture I grew up in creaking and straining, going through radical change. It was being replaced by something newer, rougher-edged, unformed, or by some touristic, "nostalgic" self-conscious version of its former self. It felt oddly as if England, having lost its empire in one generation, were now its own last colony—a sort of culture-in-exile within its own shores.

When Scott began to write his complex saga of British India—to bring to life Daphne Manners, Hari Kumar, Barbie Batchelor, Ronald Merrick, Lady Chatterjee, and the Layton girls—the Raj was seen in England as vaguely embarrassing, as something of a joke. There was a reluctance, amounting to a taboo, about looking seriously at the events of 1947 or their long-term consequences. Doggedly, Scott drew back the veil and revealed layer upon layer of a whole political and historical moment, a rich social world. He took great pains over the details of life of district commissioners, governors' A.D.C.s, Englishmen of the Indian Army or the Indian Police, captains and colonels of pukka regiments like the "Pankot Rifles" and the "Muzzy Guides" as they did their jobs of governing a nation and fighting a war. "I tend to write about people in relation to their work, which strikes me as a subject no less important than that of their private lives," Scott once wrote. He himself, as Mrs. Spurling makes clear, was a tremendous worker. He was also a formidable psychologist, as he showed by adding, "Because their work is so often affected by their sense of personal deprivation."

Far from being some crusty Tusker Smalley type giving the regimental silver a nostalgic rub, Scott was a lifelong liberal, and as his years of thinking about the British role in India wore on he had increasing doubts about it. In the end, he came to see something "greasy and evasive" about the way the Raj pulled out unscathed from an India torn by murderous riots, after three centuries of commercial exploitation that was always billed by the British as a God-given duty and a sacred trust. Through the character of Ronald Merrick, the ruthlessly ambitious and sadistic policeman and Army officer, Scott showed the racist underside of the vaunted British system of law and order—a side that surfaces uncomfortably often in Britain today. He showed the British cynically imprisoning distinguished Indian politicians until the order came from "home" to turn the country over to those same men. He showed the shameful breaking of the spirit of Hari Kumar, the hapless hybrid—a man educated at public school in England, then cast out into a no man's land of race and class, with his upper-class English accent, which infuriates the originally lower-middle-class Merrick, and his dark-skinned face, which in an Indian crowd makes him invisible even to the Englishman who had once been his best friend.

Silhouetting such brilliantly developed characters against a distant place and a past time helped Scott get at truths about the British which he could never have seen so clearly about the British of his own day. "You write for an age, and this is my age," he once said. The age had not yet come when a man as thoroughly English as Scott could write a truthful novel about racism in an English setting, and the age had probably passed when such a man could write, as he did, in realist style (without rage or ribaldry, like his peers the Angry Young Men), about the whole range of class prejudice at home. Scott was profoundly aware of the sub-

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tleties of class, as the British are still. The working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds of Mrs. Thatcher and her male protégés, as well as of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, were and are of the greatest interest. Indeed, in her expediency, her willingness to do the political dirty work that her "wet" Old Etonian colleagues were too gentlemanly to stomach, Margaret Thatcher had a lot in common with Ronald Merrick.

Mrs. Spurling is splendidly specific about Scott's childhood, between the wars, in the newly developed North London suburbs of Southgate and Palmers Green, with their social pretensions, their streets of semidetached houses with "pocket-sized shrubberies at the front . . . bow windows with decorative stained-glass strips opening on to long, narrow gardens at the back, and . . . tradesmen's doors at the side." They were neighborhoods "full of people moving up from one class to another," and committed to toeing and enforcing the social line. India became an obsession with Scott, the key to his expression, but this childhood world was his heartland—the place where he absorbed the dictionary of snobbery and acquired his knowledge of accent, snub, and cut. For him, the codes of British India—the hierarchy of club, cantonment, and regimental mess—were really just the pecking order of Palmers Green writ large. In a way, as Scott and his English readers well knew, "The Raj Quartet" never leaves home. Its author barely did. Aside from his three years in India (in the unglamorous, administrative branch of the Army, doing the paperwork of supply), he rarely got out of London. In his lifetime's handful of addresses, he never moved more than a few miles from the modest house where, in 1920, in another suburban bedroom, his mother brought him into the world.

SCOTT'S mother, Frances, was a lively, dashing woman who had escaped her background first by rising to a job as cashier in a drapery shop and then by marrying, at the age of thirty, a forty-six-year-old fashion illustrator called Tom Scott. Frances came from a large, poor Victorian family, and opportunities for girls like her were almost nonexistent. Her sister Ruth took the more predictable course of domestic service; after cooking most of her life for a family, and living in a single room in Brixton Hill, she would die (in 1971) alone and penniless in a poky council flat. For Frances, Tom was a catch. In partnership with his unmarried sisters, he maintained a studio in a large Edwardian house called Wyphurst, in Southgate High Street. Even after he had married and was living, with his wife and two small sons (Paul's brother, Peter, was two years older), in a house a half mile off, Tom spent most of his time with his elderly sisters, Florrie and Laura, at Wyphurst, which was sacred to his work. Paul was working class on his mother's side, middle class on his father's, and he was sent to a private school to absorb the code of cricket, King, and empire, and become a gentleman. In a very English way, he felt he was a displaced person; Hari Kumar was only one of a line of half-castes and hybrids who haunted Scott's fiction from the start.

Frances had ferocious will and energy, and she focussed it on her gifted younger son. "He bore the full brunt," Mrs. Spurling says, "of her dreams, ambitions, and plans." She could be tyrannical or seductive; she had a habit of storming out on her husband and sons when she was thwarted, and staying away for weeks. "Before her marriage, she used to hide in a cupboard and write novels," Scott wrote of his mother, from whom he was implacably estranged for most of her old age. "On the night before her wedding . . . she destroyed her manuscripts but always remembered the title of her favourite: The Keepsake. I have often wondered whether it was any good; or whether it ever actually existed. She had a vivid imagination." Even as a little boy, he was tuned in to her emotional hunger; he learned early on to shield himself from it by switching off his feelings—shutting down. She called this "sulking," or, later, when he was old enough to smoke, comb his hair like Noël Coward, and write risqué one-act plays, or romantic verse in the style of Rupert Brooke, "listening to his Muse."

Frances was, her son's biographer observes, the forerunner of a "line of lonely, vulnerable, insecure wives" in his novels—"women whose energies have found no outlet and whose talents run slowly to waste." Most of the drama of Paul Scott's life took place within the four walls of his house or inside his head. Mrs. Spurling, who is

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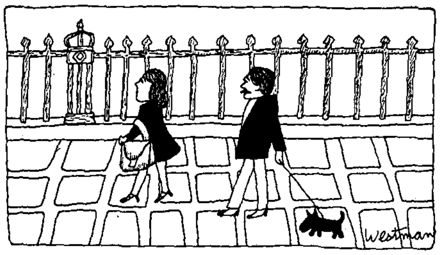
the author of a biography of Ivy Compton-Burnett and is married to a writer, has a feel for complicated creative people with their slippers on, at home. She knows that hidden domestic struggles between men, women, and children can be as lethal for the participants as great national battles or revolutions. In many ways, this biography reads like a novel—something in the style of those stories by Saki in which among the very proper shrubberies and windows open to the lawn something spooky is going on. It seems right—part of the texture of the Paul Scott tale—that it should be brought to light by a woman. The million words of the "Quartet," the nine other novels, the poems and plays—all this outpouring by Scott is somehow bookended by the secret, shadow manuscripts of his mother and his wife. Penny Scott fared better than her mother-in-law: she actually published several novels. But she was also silenced as time and her marriage wore on, and her later books failed to find a publisher. In the minutely printed footnote listing sources, Mrs. Spurling cites one of these unpublished manuscripts of Penny's—the poignantly entitled "My Story"—and, together with those novels Frances claimed to have scribbled, crouching in what was no doubt the only private space in her family's crowded house, it haunts the man's life story like a stillborn ghost.

In his maturity, Scott's work demonstrates an empathy for the feminine which is rare in male writers, and especially in one of his generation. Beside the male characters of the "Quartet"—men effecting decisions of state, men fighting wars, men at work—is an extraordinary range of women characters: young and old, bright and foolish, married and unmarried, rich and poor, beautiful and plain. Many of the viewpoints between which the narrative shifts with great virtuosity are the viewpoints of women. The rape victim, Daphne Manners, tells her own story through her journal; the elder Layton daughter, Sarah, the insider who is also an outsider, becomes a more and more visible and perceptive narrator as the story unfolds. Scott's exploration of female experience—marriage, maternity, loss of virginity, abortion, relationships between two sisters, dutiful self-sacrifice to the family—is utterly believable. The large events are often seen through the eyes of the powerless and the marginalized, and Scott gives them their full humanity. Parallel to the great, dark spiritual journey of the villainous (yet in the end not unsympathetic) Merrick is the great, light-filled Calvary of poor Barbie Batchelor, the retired mission-school teacher. No angle of Scott's novelistic prism more clearly shows the breakdown of the Raj than the story of the plain, penurious elderly spinster cast out to die by a society too far gone to take care of even the most vulnerable of its own. The most vulnerable but also the most visionary. To the prattly old Barbie (who, by Scott's account, "ran away with" the third volume), with her Cockney vowels, her little shifts and stratagems, her constant humiliations, and her reckless courage, Scott gives the grandest view—the Augustinian struggle with faith, the prescient dreams, the passage through the scrim of day-to-day life to a deeper than personal truth.

If you listen carefully to Mrs. Spurling's story, you can detect early the fatal sound of a closing down, of a very slowly progressing entombment of Paul Scott the man. "The novelist destroys the house of his life and uses its stones to build the house of his novel," the biographer notes on her title page, quoting Milan Kundera. In Scott's youth, the sound is a faint, Chekhovian *crump;* in his middle age, a string of bangs and slams. When Paul was in his early teens, his father's income dried up, and Tom Scott was obliged to combine his two families under the Wyphurst roof, much to everyone's discomfort. Paul was left with a lifelong horror of rows and emotional exchanges and with a terror, when he was himself a husband and father, of not being able to pay the bills. At fourteen, to his profound shock, he was obliged to leave school and go out to work as a trainee accountant. He worked all day, took courses at night, and began to write. "I grew early into the habit of having no leisure," he said. He became fascinated by the Wildean theme of the face in the mirror, by the double self, Jekyll and Hyde. He had a love affair with an older man—a theatre-and-ballet-going estate agent from Streatham. The budding poet wrote love verses to his mentor; "It Never Happened," one of them was called.

Along came the war, and Paul was called up. Wyphurst was lost in the blitz, and Florrie and Laura along with it. The young man was happy enough with barracks life until a sadistic superior officer demoted him, threatening to expose his homosexuality. This crushing experience gave rise twenty-five years later to the character of Merrick, whose abuse of power is closely linked to his own secret homosexuality. At the time, young Paul was beside himself; he might have broken down completely if he hadn't known to dull his psychic pain with gin. He went on a ten-day bender, from which he emerged with a determination to take "the normal road," as a resolutely heterosexual man. A nursing sister called Penny Avery crossed his path in Torquay. Right away, he told her that he intended to marry her. The couple entered the magic circle on the dance floor and, to the tune of "In the Mood," fell in step. Penny had been a motherless and unloved child, and she sensed that Paul was somehow split and damaged. (She seems to have known nothing of his recent trauma with the officer, or, indeed—until the publication of this biography—of his homosexuality.) In the old, old female story, Penny embarked on the old, old course: trying to mend a wounded man in an attempt to heal the hurt little girl from her past.



Frances had been complacent about the man from Streatham, but she was livid when, in 1941, after just a few months of courtship, Penny and Paul were wed. The years in "metaphorical" India followed, separating Paul and his bride. (Penny came to feel jealous of India, seeing the separation as lasting not just for the duration of the war but for the rest of their lives.) For him, India was a second birth. Wide sky, huge land, teeming characters; an active, necessary life. Forever, this would be his great moment—the open, unimprisoned time. Then he was back home, and the young Mr. and Mrs. Scott were setting up house in Southgate, calling each other Honey Boy and Honey Girl. She made her own curtains; he went off down the front-garden path each day with his briefcase to his job as an accountant in

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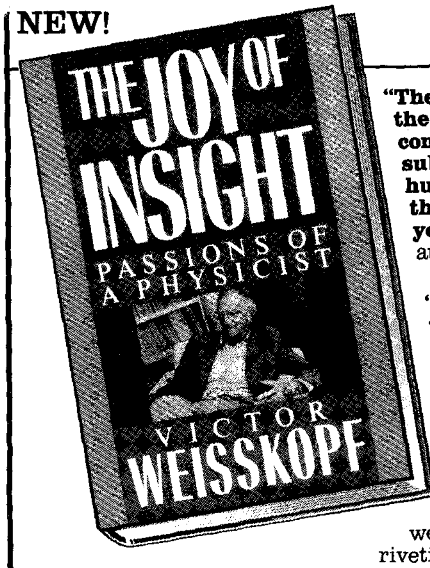

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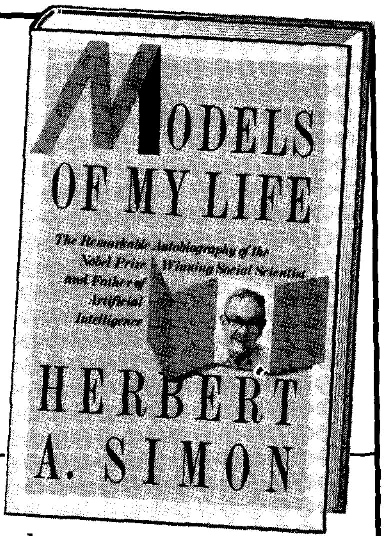
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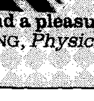

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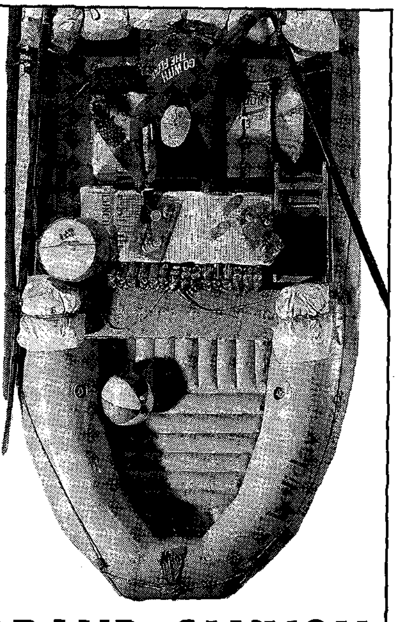

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a publishing house. (Mrs. Spurling vividly evokes this rather rackety establishment, and the whole atmosphere of postwar literary London.) At home, Penny pushed the big double pram with Carol and Sally, her two girl babies, born in 1947 and 1948. Although in "My Story" she was to write of feeling lonely, this was probably *her* great moment, her open sky.

All through the nineteen-fifties, Paul set off every morning like the rest of the suburban men. By now, he was more substantially employed, as a literary agent with David Higham. Scott was conscientious, hardworking, and sociable. His administrative and financial competence, together with his knack of soothing ruffled egos, made him very good at his job. His clients adored him and called him a "prince." In his spare time, he methodically turned out novels and plays. "Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: two hours in the evening; Saturday mornings, 9.30 to lunchtime. Sundays: either morning or afternoon; or both if the mood's right." His work habits impressed his fellow-writers or appalled them. "Bleak and self-denying," one friend said. His two little girls grew up rarely seeing Daddy, knowing not to disturb him at work. They lived for the windows that opened sporadically onto a loving, playful, giving man: Christmas, the annual fortnight by the seaside, Guy Fawkes Night.

The kitchen was Penny's domain. It had yellow walls, a cheerful fire, a tribe of cats, geraniums on the sill. Paul would walk right through it, passing his wife and girls sewing or making cakes at the big old table, and mount the stairs to his chilly, lonely cell. It had a single small window, an austere schoolboy desk, two bookcases, and a portrait of him as a handsome young lieutenant, painted by an Army pal. He needed to know Penny was in the house. She was fiercely loyal, indignant about his detractors always. He had to write. "I had a wife, two children, a large mortgage, and a horror of ivory towers," he said. But that wasn't all. He was trying to save his life. Each of the books except the first had an actual or attempted suicide in it; the task of writing to relieve his depression grew more Sisyphean with each passing year. He could be a great joker and raconteur, yet from his early youth he was, at heart, in mourning for his unlived life. "All his life, Paul filled his creative bucket at the well of depression," Mrs. Spurling says. An underlying sadness was the price he paid for defensively refusing to feel; for his unacceptable (and, in England at the time, illegal) sexuality and its burial under a false self; even for his magic time in India, where he contracted a chronic intestinal condition called amebiasis, which sapped his vitality until it was finally treated, in 1964. Writing gave him respite from imprisonment in all this. So, he thought, did booze. Drink helped him to live, feel, and write—until it turned on him and started helping him to die.

FRANCES was proud of her capacity for gin and taught Paul to drink it at the age of six. As a youth, he had a hollow leg. "Moody devil. Drinks like a fish and never shows it," a fellow-soldier said, trying to warn off Penny, but she was instantly hooked. Through booze, Paul had smothered the homosexual aesthete within him and activated the irresistible ladies' man. It was a Faustian compact, a dangerous "success." In his years as an agent, his clients came in for long, convivial lunches and often joined him for "a spot of Dog-and-Ducking," as he called a visit to his favorite pub. But he was never a social drinker. He drank to try to normalize himself, in an increasingly furtive, increasingly desperate attempt at self-medication. Feelings not useful to his literary obsessions he ruthlessly drowned. He depended on his wife—loved her, no doubt. Yet he seemed to hate her: sneering at her, not speaking for weeks on end, shutting her out. But then he had to jump-start his deadened heart to life again, to provide emotion for his work. "Writing is not observation—it is feeling," he once said.

"Sometimes fear I'll become an alcoholic," he confided in a letter to a friend —years after his alcoholism had progressed enough to exact from him and his wife and daughters a frightful toll. "The awful thing is that at a certain stage my mind seems to go blank," he said, describing his benders, trying to get a handle on what alcohol was doing to his body and his brain. Something monstrous lay crouched in him, waiting to spring out. He would come home after a night of drinking not knowing what had happened or where he had been. In her yellow kitchen, by the dying fire, an anxious Penny would have waited up. She loosened his clothing, propped him up on pillows in the lamplight, lay for hours at his side, monitoring his breathing, after he passed out. She knew better than to mention any of this the next day. "The silence between them on these matters became unbreakable," Mrs. Spurling says. "Each time it was as if . . . 'It Never Happened.'" One night, he tried to poison himself with carbon monoxide, but the garage doors blew open in a sudden gust of wind. Another night, he crawled on all fours round his study, howling with self-hate; he lunged at his portrait with a dagger, and cut its throat.

People meeting him for the first time were often surprised by his unassuming style of dress—more like an accountant's or a provincial businessman's. "He was *so* gentle and *so* good," a woman who was a client said after his death. "He would have been so easy to look after and make happy." She was not the only one of their friends who tried to lay blame for his withdrawal on Penny, whom we see, in Mrs. Spurling's portrait, fluttering signals from her dark and lonely home that she was in urgent need of help. She began to fall sick, to have accidents in the garden and the house. Using her husband's cast-off typewriter and a pseudonym, she began to write novels herself. When he left Higham's to write full-time, in 1960, her hopes of seeing more of him and regaining her sweet old companion were swiftly dashed. His discipline more self-flagellating than ever, he became even more forbidding with her, more remote. From seven in the morning, he was immured in his room, staring at his inner world and working his way through his daily bottle of Carew's gin. By alchemy, he transmuted every bit of himself into his story—disappearing into each of his characters and lavishing on them a compassion so powerful it makes your hair stand on end.

His early novels, most of which he repudiated later on, turn out to be sodden with booze—filled with chronic, self-pitying alcoholics too sensitive to live in the world. It is more common for this tone to seep into the later works of writers who drink. Yet for almost the whole length of "The Raj Quartet" Scott's mortal obsession with the bottle is undetectable. The gin had burned right off his prose in an etherized moment that was, for him as a

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writer, a kind of grace. There was just Barbie, and Merrick, and what Scott called "the mystery of human behaviour," and disquieting spiritual truths. But in the Faustian compact time was running out. By the end of the final volume, something more self-serving, less transcendent is creeping back. There is some prolixity in the style, something compensatory about the brilliance, as if the author were writing with a hangover, against the odds.

There is a photograph in this biography of Paul Scott in his back garden a year or so before the end. He seems like a dingy zoo animal in his patch of London sunshine that does not warm his bones. He looks bloated in the midriff and puffy in the face—robbed of all his dignity, somehow. His eyes are dead. Penny, by now in her early sixties, had also run out of rope; she had sought help from a center for battered women and was living on Social Security in a rented room in Swiss Cottage.

If I have any reservation about Mrs. Spurling's book, it is that she doesn't seem to understand that the disease of alcoholism did this to the Scotts. Her index lists "amebiasis" in the section on Paul's health, and "drinking habits" under "character and interests." She suggests that after the purge of his amebiasis, in a Paris clinic, he was no longer a sick man. It is true that a miasma seemed to lift for him then; even his prose style changed, opened up. But it was an illusory reprieve, whose effect was largely confined to his art. As an alcoholic who couldn't stop drinking, he was still committing suicide. The disease of alcoholism is as patient as a tiger; it will wait in hiding for its victims for years and years. Like most people of their place and generation, Paul and Penny Scott had no idea what was going wrong. Mrs. Spurling can see the tiger and trace its movements, but she is not willing to take away its power by giving it its name. This baffling disease even charms her sometimes. "Less apprehensive passengers [than his wife] reported Paul a brilliant driver when drunk: at the wheel, as at the typewriter, drink steadied his nerve and sharpened his concentration, enabling him to take risks," she writes, gaily. Strapped for cash at the finish, he ventured all the way to Tulsa to teach creative writing. Alone among acquaintances who, while adoring, were all brand-new, he was hospitalized with advanced cirrhosis and cancer of the colon spreading to the liver. He had no problem "managing without alcohol" Mrs. Spurling says of him in this period, as if the choice were casual and had been available all along. Even to the perceptive narrator of Scott's heartbreaking story, alcoholism presents itself with more disguises than a trickster: as amebiasis, as a lost sexuality, as the human condition, as—a favorite, this—great art. But, mercifully for the families, the artists, the people of our place and generation, we are beginning to see where alcoholism and life divide.

—KENNEDY FRASER

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

RUMOR HAS IT, by Charles Dickinson (Morrow; $18.95). This group portrait of a city newspaper's longtime staff is amusing, recognizable, and very appealing: the unfirable incompetent who is passed from department to department; a pregnant reporter who can dispose of a threatening official with one hand, without getting up from her desk; the attitudes of reporters toward the paper's owner, and toward a colleague who sells their scoops to a competing paper; their many and various crotchets and exploits. The action takes place on the day it is announced that the rich life of this hive is to be terminated and the paper shut down. It is also the day that one of the chief editors, Dan Fain, may have happened on a scoop himself. But the collective organism that is a newspaper is the central character. Dan's role in the mess is less interesting than the sheer reporting on life in a newsroom—the evaluation of what makes a story and how it is to be presented, the knowingness that newspaper work demands—which Dickinson, an editor for the Chicago *Tribune*, turns to gold.

THE RISE OF LIFE ON EARTH, by Joyce Carol Oates (New Directions; $16.95). That life is nasty, brutish, and short is a maxim exemplified by this novella, which in its short span comprises astonishing nastiness and brutality. Eleven-year-old Kathleen is brought to the hospital having been beaten nearly to death by her father, who is prosecuted for having beaten her younger sister to death. But it was Kathleen who fatally bludgeoned her. This becomes the almost mechanical trick that powers the story: Kathleen gets hurt, and secretly destroys some other victim. If the scenes showing Kathleen under life's knife are excruciating, however, they are counterweighted by being rendered in prose that can be breathtaking in its sharp juxtapositions, and just plain beautiful.

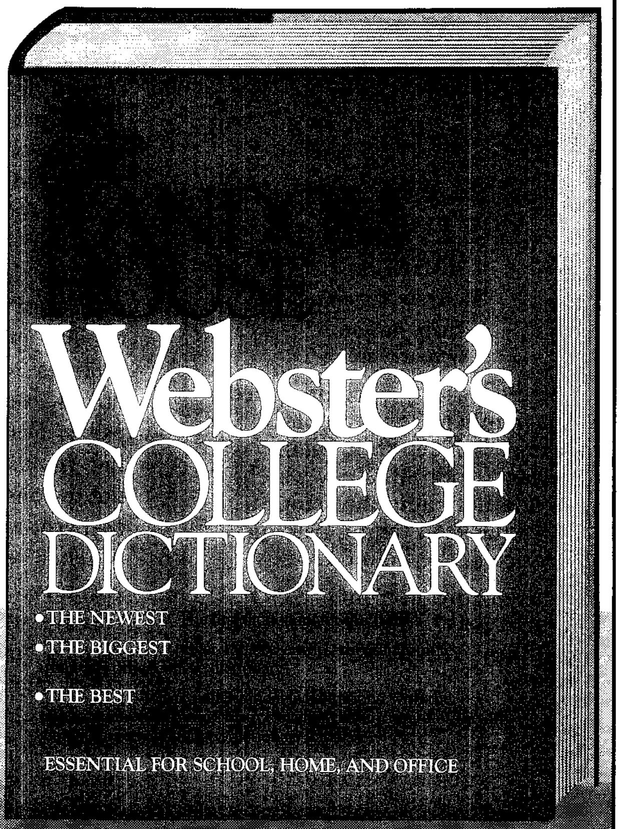
NOTE: "The Incubator Ballroom: A Novella and Four Stories," by John Rolfe Gardiner, has been published by Knopf ($20). Most of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. . . . "A Model World," a collection of stories by Michael Chabon, has been published by Morrow ($18.95). Most of the stories first appeared here.

GENERAL

A HISTORY OF THE ARAB PEOPLES, by Albert Hourani (Harvard; $24.95). In surveying his subject, Mr. Hourani's gaze sweeps from the Atlantic to the Indus, and from the time of the Prophet to the present. To encompass this vastness in less than five hundred pages, the book chronicles the rise and fall of dynasties, not of rulers, the migrations of whole peoples, not the travels of individuals. Throughout, Mr. Hourani relies on certain themes: the central importance of Islam and the Arabic language in binding together the Arab world; the changing relations between towns and countryside; and the varying strategies by which rulers held on to their power. Dynasties often had their origins in the countryside, but needed the economic strength of cities, and the religious legitimacy conferred by the Islamic clerics there, to support their regimes. Then the qualities that had enabled the outsiders to become rulers evaporated in the sophisticated atmosphere of the cities, and eventually new challengers arose from the desert. The story is punctuated by big events—the bubonic plague, the fall of Byzantium, the discovery of the New World. Mr. Hourani's analysis is always concise, never simplistic. One finishes the book filled with further questions, and he has provided a short bibliography to guide further ventures into the Arab world.

U AND I: A TRUE STORY, by Nicholson Baker (Random House; $18). Mr. Baker extends the delightful

The New Definition of Dictionary



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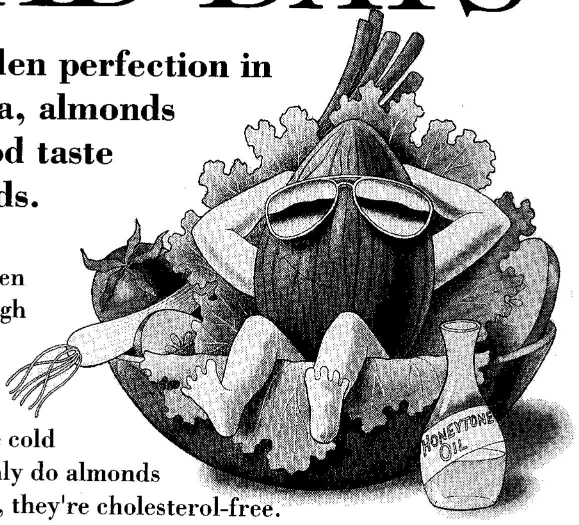

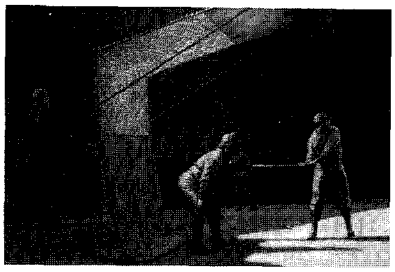

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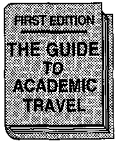

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mini-realism of his two short novels “The Mezzanine” and “Room Temperature” into this book-length essay, a close and self-pitiless examination of his relationship with a mental figment derived from a fractional perusal and a few personal glimpses of the author John Updike. The younger writer looks to “Updike” less to learn how to write than to learn how to be a writer; he focusses therefore on the behavioral aspects of his topic’s œuvre—dedications, prize-acceptance speeches, prefaces to special editions of his novels, even the phrases on copyright pages. Before composing this peculiar *hommage*, Mr. Baker resolved not to consult the works of its titular co-hero, and his memory, bracketed addenda reveal, usually tricked him. He marvels, for instance, at Updike’s creative use of the word “pool” to signify the head of a dandelion, when the word really employed was the unremarkable “poll,” as in “poll tax” and “to pollard.” Mr. Baker’s own vocabulary glitters on the verge of fireworks: he can be “as *tarabiscoté* as George Saintsbury or Henry James” while he goes about “impanating”—placing in bread—“doings in linear sentences.” His scrupulous wrestle with the impalpable can be quite comic, but his basic point is serious: out of the books of others we sift a book of our own, wherein we read the lessons we need to hear.

VERSE

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF HENRI COULETTE, edited by Donald Justice and Robert Mezey (Arkansas; $24.95). A Southern California holdout against the twentieth-century fashions of Southern California, Henri Coulette seemed to get paid back for his obstinacy: his second book was shredded by its publisher (“through an inexcusable error,” his fellow-poets say in their introduction) before it could be fully distributed; when he died, in 1988, at sixty, his third book was left unpublished. It appears here, with the other two, and with fourteen uncollected poems. Throughout his life, Coulette wrote mainly in the traditional syntax, forms, and meters that poets around him had abandoned. Although the subjects of his earlier poems—attics, the seasons, *nostalgie*—match the archaic-sounding self-restraint, there are hints of the tense freedom that comes later, when Coulette’s forms begin to frame expressly contemporary sights. As his cool and sometimes witty lines run up against the assassinations of the nineteen-sixties and the various excesses of the seventies and eighties, the impression is of a West Coast Auden caught on the freeways, and catching them back. As the poet says, “It is a way / Of being faithful to one’s terror.”

KENTUCKY, by I. J. Schwartz, translated from the Yiddish by Gertrude W. Dubrovsky (Alabama; $34.95). I. J. Schwartz, the Lithuanian-born son of a rabbi, founded a millinery shop in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1918; by day he minded the store, and at night he wrote poetry. The nine odes collected here have never been fully translated before. Each tells a story of early-twentieth-century Southern life: a travelling Jewish salesman marries a Gentile farm girl and is murdered by her brother; a remorseful black criminal is sentenced to death; an Eastern European Jew named Joshua establishes a scrap yard in Kentucky and fathers eight children, who all somehow disappoint him. In the background lie the paradoxical Southern landscape, where decrepit slums adjoin bluegrass fields that smell “sweet juicy fragrant,” and vivid minor characters—Civil War veterans, former slaves, white lounge lizards who dance the hoochy-cooch, and prosperous German-American Jews who scorn their newly arrived Lithuanian cousins. The author is bemused by the habits of Southern Gentiles, and passionate when writing about the land.

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ACADEMIC NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Graduate Record, 1990-91, published by the University of Virginia*]

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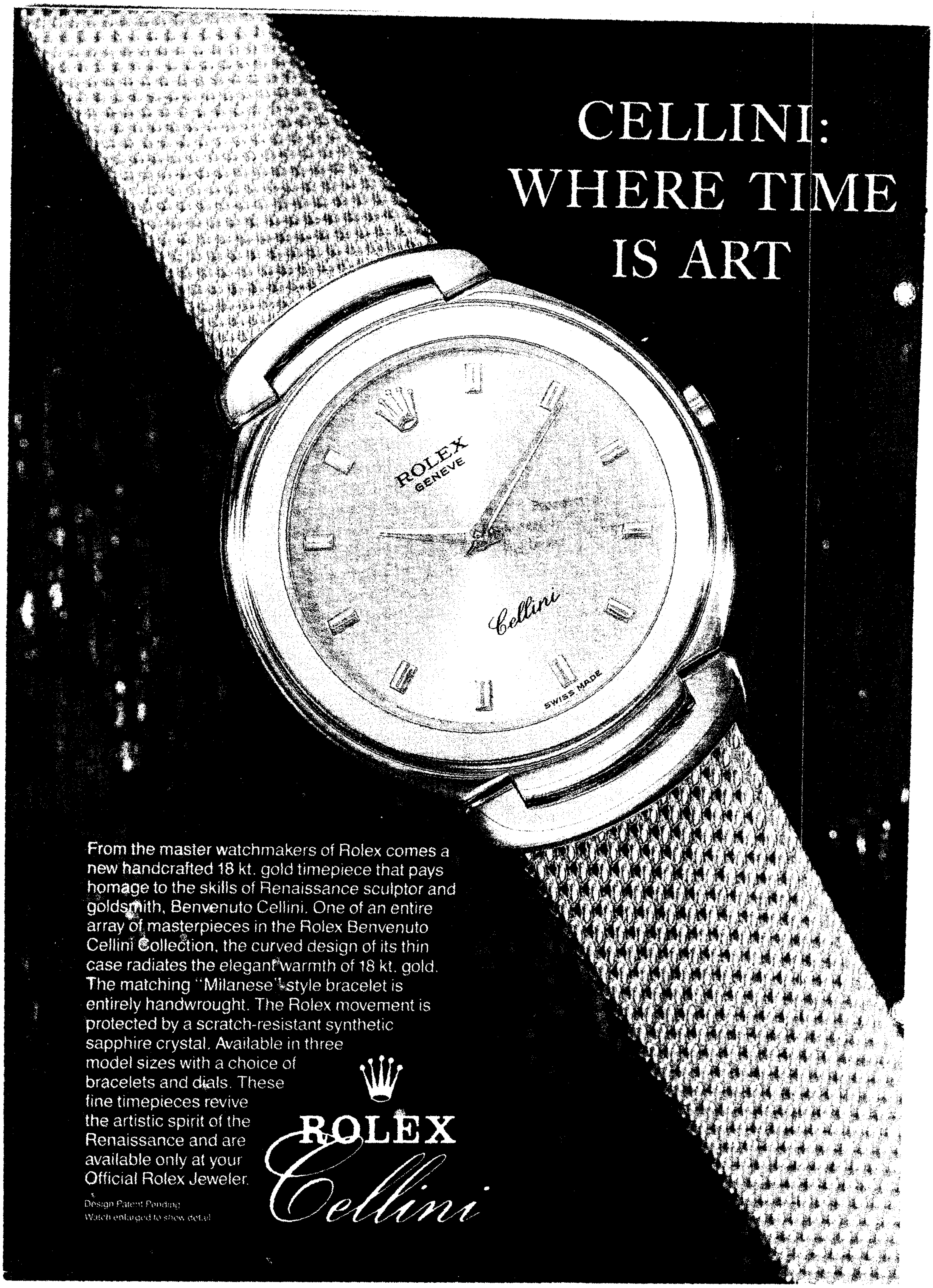

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